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Chess

All Hail To...
KING DING

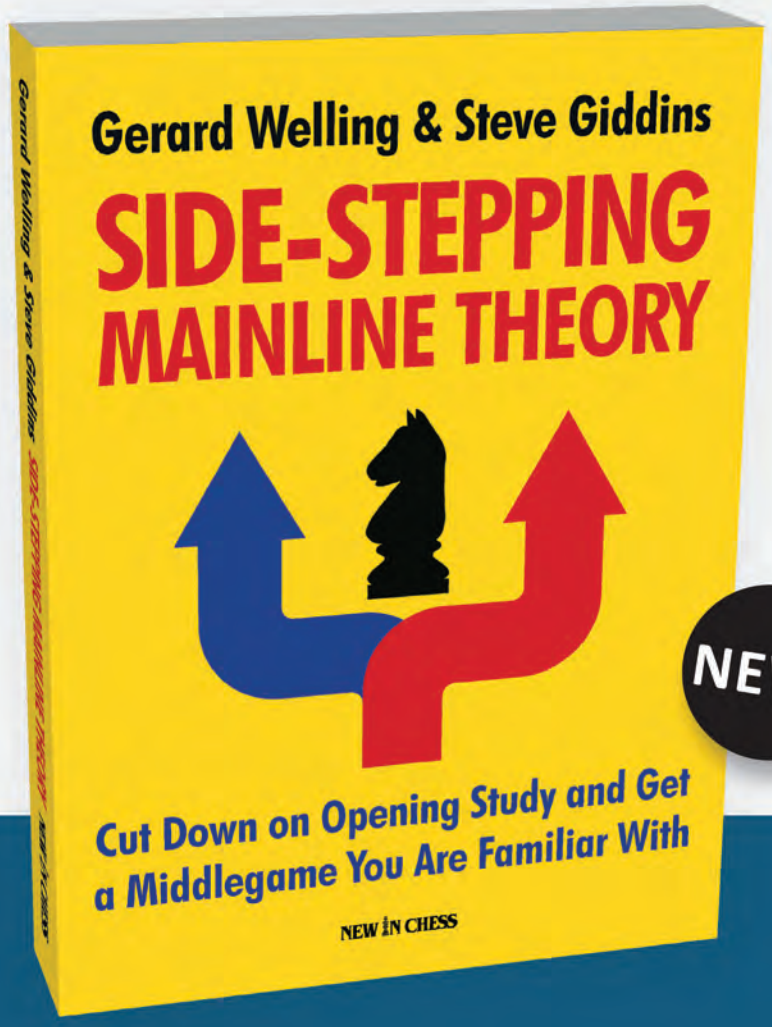
Ding Liren defeats Magnus Carlsen in blitz tie-breaker to capture the Sinquefield Cup

ISSN 0964-6221

It's chess Jim, but... - Matthew Sadler enjoyed the Mind Sports Olympiad
To Hull, and Back - Sean Marsh reports from the English Women's Championship
"It Starts with Hello" - Ben Graff sees how the 64 squares can bring people together

VISIT…

Spend more time studying what's really decisive in your games



World Champion Emanuel Lasker argued that improving amateurs should spend about 5% of their study time on openings. These days club players are probably closer to 80%, often focusing on opening lines that are popular among grandmasters.

The main objective for club players should be to emerge from the opening with a reasonable position, from which you can simply play chess and pit your own tactical and positional understanding against that of your opponent.

Gerard Welling and Steve Giddins recommend the Old Indian-Hanham Philidor set-up as a basis for both Black and White. They provide ideas and strategies that can be learned in the shortest possible time, require the bare minimum of maintenance and updating, and lead to rock-solid positions that you will know how to handle.

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Chess

Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE. M.Sc †
Executive Editor: Malcolm Pein
Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Subscriptions Manager: Paul Harrington

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess - Malcolm Pein
Website: www.chess.co.uk

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Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein **@TelegraphChess**

11th London Chess Classic

By the time the magazine arrives, most of the components of the London Chess Classic will be in place. For all tournament players we will have: a 9-round FIDE-rated Open beginning Friday, November 29th, weekend tournaments, weekday tournaments, a one-day Rapid and, by popular demand, the Super Blitz, which will conclude the London Chess Classic Festival on Sunday December 8th. You can enter all these events at **londonchessclassic.com**.

For women and girls, I'm really delighted to announce the 1st English Women and Girls Rapidplay Championship on Saturday December 7th. For those interested in developing chess and improving the levels of female participation the theme of the 7th London Chess Classic Conference, supported by Chess in Schools and Communities, the European Chess Union, FIDE and the ECF, will be 'Chess and Female Empowerment'. The conference will be held at the Irish Community Centre in Hammersmith over the weekend of November 30th and December 1st. Please see londonchessconference for more information.

For aspiring chess tutors or existing ones who wish to develop their skills there will be the CSC Chess teacher courses and the ECU advanced course, as well as a course on teaching mathematics with chess run by Rita Atkins.

If you would like to watch the elite event, I'm afraid tickets are not quite on sale yet as the format is yet to be finalised. As ever, entry to any of the tournaments at the Olympia Conference Centre will also include free entrance to the theatre to watch the grandmaster tournament. Please check Londonchessclassic.com or follow the tournament on Twitter via @london_Chess and @LondonChessConf.

Chess for Change

Over the last couple of years Chess in Schools and Communities have increased the focus on the community aspect of what we do. This includes developing and running chess activities for older people, delivering chess to care homes, to children in hospital with eating disorders, and many other projects. Our prison project has developed apace with weekly clubs now established in six prisons and several more planned but in need of funding.

Matt Hancock has recognised chess can help keep the brain active and ward off social isolation.

I's nearly 10 years since the charity was formed and now, for some reason, our work has come to the attention of the government. In a speech given in Brighton just before last year's London Chess Classic, Matt Hancock, the Health Minister, said:

"In Brighton the Dementia Action Alliance is partnering with Chess in Schools and Communities to give free chess lessons to older people, helping them keep their minds active while giving them opportunities to socialise. Participating in music can help bring people together and stimulate memories – through Singing for the Brain for example. Common-sense interventions like these are simple yet effective. And I want to see more of them."

CSC is joining a new initiative from the NHS called Social Prescribing and is registered with an NHS portal which will enable Social Prescribers to have patients referred to them by GPs when they think an activity may be stimulating and/or help diminish their social isolation. Social prescribers could recommend anything from walking groups to chess.

Amidst the current political turmoil, Matt Hancock is unusual, as he has actually been in post for more than five minutes. Also last year I was invited to see the then Minister of Prisons Rory Stewart to discuss our prison programme which the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is helping us promote to prison governors.

It proved to be very hard to get the programme started. I had many frustrating experiences and even on one occasion, a direct encounter with the contents of a chamber pot, but there is real momentum now. In August we managed to get clearance from the MoJ for internet access at HMP Wandsworth and we entered a team in the World Prison Internet Championships on Chess.com organised by Mikhail Korenman who runs a big programme at Cook County Jail.

Former minister Rory Stewart has also helped CSC as the charity takes chess into prisons.

The prisoners were not allowed to use the mouse, so CSC Prisons Coordinator Peter

Full details of the London Chess Classic elite event will be announced soon.

Sullivan, ECF Manager of Prisons Chess Carl Portman and I entered the prisoners' moves and made the replies on real sets and boards. This made our players 4-5 minutes slower in a 15-minute time limit, but if ever there was a case of the taking part being more important, this was it. We hope to do more such activities in the future and in some prisons, where there are screens in cells - with limited access of course - chess could be very popular.

I'd be pleased to hear from people who would like to work in prisons or even chess clubs who would be interested in taking a team to play at their local prison.

Calendar Crush

This is not a new computer game, but a description of the timetable of world chess in the last four months of the year. As soon as the World Cup ends, the FIDE Swiss on the Isle of Man begins and then there are the European Team Championships and the European Club Cup. Sandwiched in amongst all this are the Hamburg leg of the FIDE Grand Prix, the Bucharest Grand Chess Tour Rapid and Blitz, and the Calcutta Grand Chess Tour Rapid and Blitz!

That is all followed, a day or two later, by the London Chess Classic. The day after the London Chess Classic the final leg of the FIDE Grand Prix begins in Tel-Aviv and that takes us to Christmas. There won't be a World Cup next year, but there is the Olympiad at Khanty-Mansiysk and a World Championship. There needs to be better forward planning in chess so that more events can be staged in the first half of the year.

I am thinking about the 12th London Chess Classic in 2020 now. A new venue is required, with lower costs.

Look East!

In general, FIDE seems to be improving its organisation and there have been a few positive moves. There is a proper functioning press office and social media presence. Moreover, the website has been revamped and looks quite nice. That's been an embarrassment for years. However, with the announcement of Ekaterinburg as the venue for the 2020 Candidates, the siting of the Women's Grand Prix at Skolkovo outside Moscow, as well at the 2020 Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk followed by the 2022 Olympiad in Minsk, it's clear that the dream of the FIDE President and Executive to get better acquainted with western companies is still very much a work in progress.

Grand Chess Draw

The Sinquefield Cup was criticised for the large number of draws and there were few decisive games. Just 12 of the 66 games ended decisively. There was the usual chorus of classical chess is dead, but this is nonsense. Most events this year have been very entertaining and this is almost a golden period in my view. The issue is that if you have only very closely ranked players in your event then you will get a lot of draws. We had this issue with the final GCT event at the Classic a few years back. Invite an interesting mix of players with a little variation in rating and you get a great event, just as Wijk aan Zee always manages.

At least the Sinquefield Cup ended sensationally as Ding Liren became the first player to defeat Magnus Carlsen in a tie-break since Levon Aronian eliminated him from the Candidates in 2007. After that Carlsen won some 10 play-offs in a row, including against Caruana and Karjakin.

Magnus at least managed to steady himself after his travails in the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz. The champ drew 9 and won his last two Classical games to finish equal first with Ding, so his subsequent play-off defeat was a serious upset. That thrust Ding forward as looking like the most likely challenger for the next world championship match. It was noteworthy that Ding also defeated Fabiano Caruana who I should emphasise I am not writing off at all. The closing stages of that power-packed Ding-Caruana encounter can be found inside, as can Ding's magical bishop retreat which floored Magnus and decided their play-off.

The GCT standings with two Rapid & Blitz events to play are:

1	Magnus Carlsen *(4 events played);*	54.5
2	Ding Liren	37.8 (4);
3	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	36.8 (5);
4-6	Levon Aronian	25.5 (3);
	Fabiano Caruana	25.5 (4);
	Karjakin	25.5 (4);
7	Nepomniachtchi	24.5 (4);
8	Anand	24.0 (3);
9	So	23.5 (3);
10	Nakamura	17.5 (4);
11	Giri	14.5 (3);
12	Mamedyarov	13.5 (4).

Carlsen's father, Henrik, told me Magnus is already mathematically qualified for the final and you would expect Ding Liren to get there as well. The other two spots could go to any of the chasing pack. Don't rule out Vishy – he should really have won the Sinquefield Cup.

World Cup Woes

The 128-player biennial competition qualifies two players to the Candidates and it's brutal. Firstly, the players have to get to Siberia and adjust to a serious time difference, and then the schedule is a test of fitness as well as chess skill, with two-game matches followed by tie-breaks. If you don't win a game in normal time in the first three rounds, then you can play non-stop for nine days before the rest day. Then it's the same again and if you are still standing, you have qualified for the Candidates. In the four-game final there is only the difference between $110,000 for victory and $80,000 for the losing finalist at stake.

English hopes were high at the outset as Luke McShane, Michael Adams and Gawain Jones all qualified. Adams fell at the first after he missed a good chance to win the opening game and subsided in the sixth tie-break encounter to Chithambaram Aravindh of India. The game looked rather like a typical Adams grind, but he was on the receiving end. There were ten Indians in the draw, yet none remained by the end of round three.

Luke and Gawain both went out in second round tie-breaks and both were unfortunate. Gawain was well on the way to levelling the score when his opponent Dmitry Jakovenko found a clever trick and the Yorkshireman decided to fall on his sword. Deep opening preparation and some smooth play produced this position after Jakovenko had played **42...♗e4-g6**. Now 43 ♖d4 was enough to consolidate the extra pawn. Instead the game concluded:

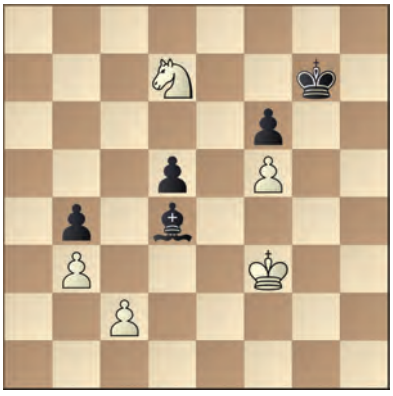
43 ♗a6? ♕a7!! 44 ♗xc8

44 ♗f1? ♖b8 wins.

44...♕f2+ 45 ♔h3 ♕f1+ 46 ♔g4 h5+! 47 ♔g5 ♕e1!

With two threats: one obvious in 48...♕xg3+; the other, not so much. Now 48 ♕d6 ♕xg3+ 49 ♗g4 hxg4 50 fxg4 ♕e3 51 h5 ♗e4 52 ♔h4 ♕e1+ 53 ♔h3 ♕h1+ forces a draw which was no good for Gawain who went for: **48 ♗f5? f6+! 49 ♔xg6 ♕e8# 0-1**

Like Mickey, Luke had good opportunities to win the first game with Black. In the tie-breaks he lost the first 25-minute game, the first 10-minute game and the first blitz game. Having 'won on demand' twice, Luke nearly did it a third time when he managed to confuse his opponent Daniel Yuffa in a completely drawn endgame. With both sides having seconds left plus the two-second increment, the white knight was lured into danger.



Yuffa has just played **81 ♔g4-f3??** which was met by **81...♔f7**. White noticed his knight was in danger and he promptly brought it back to safety with **82 ♘b8 ♗c3 83 ♘a6 ♔e7 84 ♘c5 ♔d6 85 ♘d3 ♗d2 86 ♔g4 d4 87 ♔f3 ♔d5 88 ♔e2 ♗c3 89 ♔f3 ♗d2** and Black lost on time (**1-0**). From the board above Luke missed 81....♗a7! and must have been kicking himself afterwards.

At time of writing, Anish Giri, Sergey Karjakin and Hikaru Nakamura have also been eliminated and the three remaining Americans, Wesley So, Leinier Dominguez and 18-year-old Jeffery Xiong, who had eliminated Giri, were all faced with having to win game two to stay in the competition. Levon Aronian and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave look in form, but may meet in the last eight.

He looks disgusted, but Ian Nepomniachtchi would get through and in style against Tomashevsky.

Atop the draw, Ding Liren looks well in the groove as does Alexander Grischuk.

Nepo has found his mojo again. This was a must-win game for White and Tomashevsky's choice of opening does not seem quite the right call in the circumstances.

E.Tomashevsky-I.Nepomniachtchi
FIDE World Cup,
Khanty-Mansiysk (blitz) 2019
London System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7 4 e3 0-0 5 c3 d6 6 h3 ♘bd7 7 ♗e2 ♕e8

The point of this awkward-looking move is illustrated by the line 7...♖e8 8 a4 e5? 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 12 ♗xe5. **8 a4 a5 9 0-0 b6 10 ♘a3**

White tries to exploit the downside to Black's 8th.

10...♗b7 11 ♗h2 ♘e4 12 ♘d2 ♘xd2 13 ♕xd2 e5 14 ♘b5 ♖c8 15 ♖fd1

15 ♘a7 ♖a8 16 ♘b5 ♖c8 was no help for Tomashevsky. 15 b4 looks livelier, but Black has 15...♕e7 16 bxa5 bxa5 17 ♖ab1 ♕g5!?. **15...♕e7 16 ♕c2 f5 17 dxe5 ♗xe5!**

Counterintuitive, but this removes a key a defender of the white king.

18 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 19 ♖d4

19 ♘d4 f4 20 exf4 ♖xf4 21 f3 ♖cf8 intending ...♗c8 and ...♕h4 looks great for Black.

19...♕g5 20 g3

And not 20 ♗f1? ♘f3+.

20...♕h6 21 ♔h2?!

21...g5! 22 ♕d1 ♖f6

22...♘g4+! was already winning for Black.

23 f4 ♘f7 24 fxg5!? ♕xg5 25 ♖f4 ♔h8 26 ♕g1 ♘e5 27 ♖af1 ♖h6!? 28 ♖xf5?

28...♕g4! 29 ♖f8+

Alternatively, if 29 ♗xg4 ♘xg4# or 29 h4 ♖xh4+ 30 gxh4 ♕xh4#.

29...♖xf8 30 ♖xf8+ ♔g7 31 ♖f7+ ♔xf7 32 ♕f1+ 0-1

60 Seconds with...
David Kramaley

Born: Rostov-on-Don, Soviet Union, 1987.

Place of residence: I've been in Britain since 2008 and in Swindon for the last four years, but am currently contemplating/trying out a move somewhere else – Bristol, maybe?

Occupation: All things Chessable.com.

Enjoyable? Very.

And home life? Busy, as got a little one running around. She's three.

But sometimes good to escape to: The outdoors. I enjoy any outdoor activity, especially hiking. I've been to the three tallest peaks in the UK and enjoyed every single minute of that, although lately my time outside has been limited.

Sports played or followed: When I have time, I follow football and support Liverpool and Barcelona.

A favourite novel? Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and George Orwell's *1984*.

Piece of music? Anything by Coldplay.

Film or TV series? *Friends.*

What's the best thing about playing chess? The ability for it to quickly fully absorb you into a flow state where chess is the only thing you can think about. It's awesome. The theory of flow was developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and it's super interesting and important.

And the worst? Time trouble.

Your best move? As Black, 1 e4 d5. Good luck!

But less memorable than your worst move? I had been following my book moves until this point and was either second or third, just half a point off first in a tough field at the Frome Congress.

S.Crockart-D.Kramaley
Frome Open 2017

Due to my position in the standings and playing the tournament leader, I thought I'd be aggressive and throw a curve ball here. The resulting positions I knew nothing about and instead of at least holding a draw, I lost the game. The lesson: stick to what you know, unless you are a GM and can truly figure things out in unfamiliar positions!
10...f5?! 11 0-0 ♗d6 12 b3 0-0 13 a4 ♗c7 14 ♗a3 ♖f6 15 b4 ♖h6 16 b5 ♕e8? 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 cxd5 exd5 19 ♖c1 a6 20 ♖c2 ♕g6 21 ♔h1 ♖h5 22 ♘h2 ♖g5 23 ♕f3 ♖d8? 24 ♗e7 ♖e8? 25 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 1-0

And a highly memorable opponent? I once played GM Jacob Aagaard with time odds of two minutes versus 30 seconds, which were his rules. I won the game, which was great fun. It should be up on social media some day soon.

Favourite game of all time? I don't have one.

The best three chess books: It's very easy for me to be biased here, so I won't pick any.

Is FIDE doing a good job? From what I've seen in the last year they have really upped their game and are heading in a positive direction. I hope it continues.

Or the ECF? I don't know enough to comment.

Any advice for either? Help develop young talent and focus on reducing the amount of girls dropping out from chess.

Can chess make one happy? Definitely. Flow baby!

A tip please for the club player: Check out Chessable before your opponents do!

Ed. - As you may have seen in the papers, Chessable was recently purchased by Play Magnus, who will be making a significant investment in David Kramaley's site. Play Magnus has also recently merged with Chess24, and Magnus himself commented: "I am really impressed by what David and his team have been able to achieve in such a short time. I believe this is a tool that can help players at different levels improve their chess games in an effective way." If you're yet to, do check things out at www.chessable.com!

Drama & Burnout

Saint Louis hosted the latest two legs of the Grand Chess Tour. The Rapid & Blitz was typically lively, but the Sinquefield Cup was something of a draw fest

He arrived at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz seeking his eighth tournament victory of 2019, not to mention ninth in a row, and was no doubt intending to immediately follow up in the Sinquefield Cup, but for once it was not to be for Magnus Carlsen in the American chess capital.

Four days into the Rapid and Blitz, with one to go, the audience heard a player confess: "Everything is going wrong. My confidence is long gone. I don't really care any more. To be honest, my number one wish is for the tournament to get over." And who was this demoralised tailender, if one then ranked seventh overall in the tournament? It was none other than the world champion himself. What had gone wrong?

Ding Liren gave Magnus Carlsen plenty to ponder when they played some 8 times in St. Louis.

Carlsen Crumbles

The champ wasn't helped in the Rapid by having to begin with two blacks and perhaps it wasn't such a surprise that he was outplayed by Ding Liren in the opening round. Ding has long been threatening a major success and would go on to enjoy his time in St. Louis, as we shall see. Carlsen wasn't fazed for long, however, bouncing back immediately by smoothly outplaying Richard Rapport ahead of displaying almost Kasparovian levels of energy against the latest recruit to the U.S. Olympiad team.

M.Carlsen-L.Dominguez Perez
Round 3
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♖b1 ♗e7 8 h4!?

A startling new move. Dominguez would later face 8 ♘f3 0-0 9 ♗e2 b6 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♕d3 ♗a6 12 ♕e3 ♗xe2 13 ♕xe2 cxd4 14 cxd4 ♘d7, which was likely OK for Black, although he was soon outplayed in Ding Liren-Dominguez, St. Louis (blitz) 2019.

8...0-0 9 h5 h6

Allowing White a long-term fish bone with 9...b6 10 h6 g6 is known in general to be risky for Black and for many a year before *AlphaZero* emerged on the scene. That said, 11 ♘f3 ♗b7 12 ♗d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘c6 may well be playable.

10 ♕g4

Carlsen's play reminds one of how White often menaces aggression against the French Winawer and one man who liked to do that (remember 7 h4 there?), a certain Garry Kasparov, heaped praise on White's concept: "I admit I was pleased to see Carlsen's early h4 in a nice win against Dominguez, with h5 and ♕g4 and not developing his pieces – moves only a beginner or a world champion would make!"

10...f5?

Black will quickly come to regret weakening g6 so. 10...♔h8 was necessary. Dominguez may have been worried about 11 e5, but after 11...♗d7! and if 12 ♗d3 ♗c6 13 ♖h3 ♘d7 14 ♖g3 ♖g8 15 ♕f4 cxd4 16 cxd4 f5 Black appears to be defending and maintaining a rough balance.

11 ♕g3 ♔h8

11...cxd4 12 ♗xh6 ♖f7 13 ♗d2 fxe4 14 ♘e2 would have been more messy, but Black should be still struggling here as his centre finds itself quickly undermined.

12 ♘h3! cxd4 13 ♘f4 ♔h7 14 ♗c4 ♗g5

The position may appear rather futuristic, but be in no doubt that White is doing very well, as we can see too from 14...dxc3 15 ♖xb7!? being possible, and if 15...♗xb7? 16 ♘xe6.

15 0-0 ♘c6 16 ♘g6 ♖e8 17 ♖d1

White also continues to call all the shots after 17 f4 ♗f6 18 e5 ♗e7 19 ♖d1.

17...♗xc1 18 ♖bxc1 ♕g5?

Capitulating, albeit in an unpleasant position. The only real way to fight on was to ditch an exchange with 18...e5 19 exf5 ♗xf5 20 ♗f7 ♕f6!.

19 exf5 exf5 20 cxd4 ♗d7 21 ♕c7

Tricky play, but 21 ♕xg5 hxg5 22 ♗f7 ♖e2 23 d5 and if 23...♘d8 24 ♘f8+ ♔h6 25 ♗g6 would have left Black being steamrollered.

21...♖ad8

Just as in the game, 21...♘xd4 would have been fiendishly met by 22 ♕g3!. Black can hold on to his loose pieces for now with 22...♕xg3 23 fxg3 ♖e4 24 ♗d3 ♖e6, but after 25 ♖c4 ♖d6 26 ♗c2! ♘e2+ 27 ♔f2 ♖xd1 28 ♗xd1 the knight is trapped.

22 d5 ♘d4 23 ♕g3!

There's no loose bishop on d7 this time, but the game is still pretty much up for Black due to his errant knight.

23...♖e4

23...♘e2+ 24 ♗xe2 ♖xe2 25 ♖c7! is crushing, in view of 25...♗a4 26 ♖dc1 ♖xd5? 27 ♘f4.

24 ♕xg5 hxg5 25 f3 ♘e2+ 26 ♔f2 ♘xc1 27 fxe4 ♖c8 28 ♖xc1 b5

Regaining the piece, but White's central duo will simply prove far too strong.

29 e5 ♗e8 30 d6 1-0

It was the second day where it all went wrong for Carlsen. He was smoothly outplayed by Caruana, and in a Rossolimo no less, ahead of making a most uncharacteristic oversight against Aronian and then, just when he badly needed a win to restore some confidence, Yu Yangyi held tight in a queen and bishop endgame.

M.Carlsen-L.Aronian
Round 5

A London System has turned into a bad French for Black. Notice how Carlsen has delayed castling and exploited an early exchange of bishops on g3 to develop his rook via h4. Now 20 ♕e2 would have clamped down on e5 and left White clearly for choice.

20 ♗h7+ ♔h8 21 ♘h4??

Carlsen must have missed Black's 23rd. 21 0-0-0 ♖xf4 22 gxf4 b5 23 ♗d3 would still have favoured White (23...b4 24 ♕b3 is one important idea), albeit in a slightly messy position.

21...♖xf4 22 ♘g6+ ♔xh7 23 ♘xe7+ ♖e4+

Ouch. Now White must either see his knight drop off behind enemy lines or return the queen.

24 ♕xe4+ dxe4 25 ♘xc8 ♗xc8 26 b4 ♔g6 27 c4 ♔f7

The two minor pieces are clearly superior to the rook in this endgame, but after 28 a5 bxa5 29 bxa5 White can still fight, whereas a demoralised Carlsen was to allow Black to fix the structure favourably.

28 b5? e5! 29 dxe5 a5 30 ♖d1 ♘xe5 31 ♖d4 ♗e6 32 ♖xe4 ♘xc4 33 ♔e2 ♘d6 34 ♖f4+ ♔e7 35 ♔d3 ♘b7 0-1

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen
Round 4
Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 e6

Carlsen sticks with his recent favourite rather than return to 3...g6, which had served him so well against Caruana and later would against Vachier-Lagrave too.

4 ♗xc6 bxc6 5 d3 ♘e7 6 b3

It's worth comparing what follows with 6 h4 h5 7 e5 d6!? 8 exd6 ♘g6 9 ♘fd2 ♗xd6 10 ♘c4 ♗e7 11 ♘c3 ♗a6, which had quickly turned into a rout in Giri-Carlsen, Zagreb 2019, as we saw in August's Editorial.

6...♘g6 7 h4 h5 8 e5 f6

White would maintain control after 8...d6 9 ♗b2, so Carlsen tries the other break.

9 ♘bd2!? d6?!

But this is ugly. White has sufficient compensation after 9...fxe5 10 ♕e2 d6 11 ♘c4 followed by ♘g5, but no more than that.

10 exd6 e5 11 ♗b2 ♗g4

11...♗xd6 12 ♘c4 ♗g4 13 ♕e2 ♘f4 14 ♕e4! also turns out pretty well for White.

12 ♕e2 ♕xd6 13 g3

13 ♕e4 ♔f7 14 ♘c4 ♕d7 (or 14...♕d5 15 ♘fd2) 15 g3 was another way to maintain control.

13...♗e7 14 0-0-0 ♘f8?!

Rerouting the knight towards its ideal post on d4, but now the centre opens to White's advantage. As such, Black should have preferred 14...♕d5 with ideas of ...c4; dxc4 ♕a5, although White retains an edge with 15 ♖de1!.

15 ♖de1 ♘e6?! 16 ♕e4! ♕d5

16...♘d4 17 ♘xd4 cxd4 18 f4 leaves Black under heavy pressure, but the text is arguably even worse for him.

17 ♘xe5! ♕xe4

Or if 17...fxe5 18 f3.

18 dxe4 fxe5 19 f3

Black's bishop is trapped and his structure shot.

19...♘d4 20 fxg4 hxg4 21 ♘c4 0-0 22 ♔b1 ♖f2

Carlsen does well to drum up some counterplay in a horrible position. 22...♖f3 23 ♖hg1 ♗f6 24 ♖g2 would have threatened ♘d2 and left White in complete control.

23 ♘xe5 ♘xc2 24 ♘xg4

Caruana soon goes after the black king, but he likely should have done so right away with 24 ♖c1 ♘d4 25 h5!.

24...♖g2 25 ♖eg1 ♖e2 26 h5!?

26...c4?

Another sign that Carlsen was completely out of sorts. Now White wins pretty much by force, whereas 26...♖xe4 27 ♔xc2 ♖xg4 28 h6 ♗f8 29 ♖h4 ♖g5 would have left Black still with a few hopes of holding the draw.

27 h6! c3

27...♘a3+ 28 ♗xa3 ♗xa3 29 h7+ ♔h8 30 ♘e5 is terminal too.

28 h7+ ♔f7 29 ♖f1+ ♗f6 30 ♗c1 ♘b4 31 e5 ♖xa2

Threatening mate, but Caruana has it all worked out.

32 ♘e3 ♖h8 33 exf6 g5 34 ♖d1 a5 35 ♖d4 c2+ 36 ♘xc2 ♖xc2 37 ♖xb4 ♖xc1+ 38 ♔xc1 axb4 39 ♖h6 1-0

Sleep must have been unusually hard for the world champion to come by after such adventures, but he righted the ship straight away the next day, once again out preparing and outplaying Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the Frenchman's beloved Grünfeld. That was, however, to be the high point. Next game Carlsen's Czech Benoni set-up never really convinced against Karjakin, with his weakened light squares eventually proving his downfall, after which he was perhaps fortunate not to lose too to Mamedyarov, having lost control a dozen or so moves after being hit by 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c5!?.

A Two-Horse Race

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave overpressed in a slightly better minor piece endgame against Levon Aronian in the opening round of the Rapid, the first of three wins in a row for the Armenian star. As such, Aronian led by a clear point from Ding and Carlsen at the end of the first day, but come the second it was time for Vachier-Lagrave to make his a 4/4 streak and close to within just half a point. That winning run had been sparked off by a highly creative effort and against Rapport no less.

M.Vachier-Lagrave-R.Rapport
Round 3
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♕b6 6 a3 c4 7 ♘bd2 ♘a5 8 g3 ♗d7 9 h4 0–0–0 10 ♗h3 ♔b8 11 0-0 h6 12 ♖e1 ♘e7 13 ♖b1 ♘c8 14 ♘f1 ♕c7 15 h5 ♘b6 16 ♗e3 ♗a4 17 ♕e2 ♗e7 18 ♘3h2

Highly thematic play thus far for the 6 a3 c4 variation and only Black's next turns out to be new.

18...♕d7 19 f4 g6 20 ♗f2 ♖dg8 21 ♘e3 ♘c6 22 ♔h1 ♗d8 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 ♕g4 ♕h7 25 b3!?

25 ♕xe6 ♘xd4! 26 cxd4 ♗d7 27 ♕d6+ ♗c7 28 ♕b4 ♗xh3 feels dangerous for White, so Vachier-Lagrave decides it's time to detonate the queenside.

25...cxb3

25...♗xb3 26 ♕xe6 was White's other idea when absolutely anything might have happened in the highly unclear position that arises after 26...♖e8 27 ♕g4 h5 28 ♕e2 ♖ef8 29 ♗g2 h4 30 ♔g1 hxg3 31 ♗xg3.

26 ♕xe6 ♘xd4

Here we go again, except that the French wizard had an amazing idea in store.

27 cxd4 ♗d7 28 ♕xd7!?

White might not be objectively worse after 28 ♕d6+ ♗c7 29 ♕b4 ♗xh3 30 ♖xb3 g5, but losing control of the light squares never feels entirely comfortable, so instead Vachier-Lagrave sacrifices his queen for two pieces and the initiative.

28...♘xd7 29 ♖xb3 ♘b6 30 a4 ♘xa4

With hindsight Rapport may well have wished he'd continued to play aggressively too himself, with 30...h5 31 a5 h4 32 g4 ♘c4.

31 ♘xd5 g5 32 f5

Naturally White must keep lines closed and now he even has a trio of passed pawns.

32...g4 33 ♗g2 ♘b6 34 ♘e3

Likewise, after 34 ♘xb6 ♗xb6 35 ♗e3 ♕xf5 36 ♗f4 ♔c8 37 e6 all results would have been possible with both sides having used up much of their 25 minutes (with a 10-second delay per move).

34...h5 35 f6 h4 36 ♔g1 ♗c7 37 ♖c1 ♕d7

Black should have discombobulated ahead of switching his major pieces across: 37...h3! 38 ♗h1 ♕d7 39 ♖bc3 ♖c8 must be somewhat better for him, albeit with all three results very possible in practice.

38 ♖d1 hxg3? 39 ♗xg3 ♖h3

Tempting, but White doesn't have to touch the rook.

40 ♘hf1! ♖h5?

Remarkably this is the losing move. 40...♔a8 would have been prudent.

41 ♖c3!

Suddenly White is perfectly coordinated and ♖xc7 a large threat.

41...♖c8 42 ♖dc1 ♕xd4

Allowing a lovely finish, but 42...♘a8 43 d5 was no less crushing.

43 ♖xc7! ♖xc7 44 e6 ♖hc5

Black has queen and rook for just three pieces, but there's simply no stopping White's pawns unless one prefers to exit with 44...♕xf6 45 ♖xc7 ♕xe6 46 ♖e7+.

45 ♖xc5

The pin remains deadly after this, just as it does in the event of 45 e7 ♖xc1 46 e8♕+ ♘c8 47 f7.

45...♕xc5 46 e7 ♕h5 47 ♘f5 ♘c8 48 ♘1e3 ♕g6 49 ♘d5 ♕xf5 50 ♗xc7+ 1-0

Bets appeared off once Vachier-Lagrave was crushed by Carlsen, but in turn Aronian would be ground down by Rapport in the eighth round. After that he was content with an early draw as White against Yu Yangyi, enabling Vachier-Lagrave to join him on 6½/9 (or 13/18 in GCT parlance), after crushing Caruana no less on the black side of a Fianchetto Grünfeld.

Some three points behind the leaders, back on 10/18, were the Chinese duo of Yu Yangyi, whom Daniel King pays tribute to later in these pages, and Ding Liren. A further two points adrift were all of Carlsen (when did he last lose four games in a tournament?), Caruana, Karjakin and Rapport, who all needed to do very well in the blitz.

To Blitz!

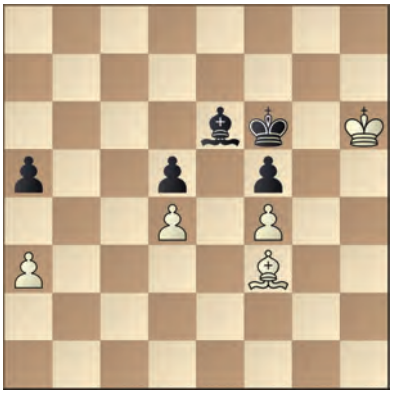
Unlike in Paris, in St. Louis there was no rest day between the Rapid and the Blitz, which was possibly why there were so many blunders once the latter got under way. Levon Aronian even left a back-rank mate on against Yu Yangyi, who amazingly failed to spot it, the game later ending in a draw. Aronian would finish the day on just '-1' and his co-leader, Vachier-Lagrave, also struggled, losing as many as four games as he battled to 50%. Carlsen made the same score, while wheeling out 1 e4 e5 2 ♕h5 against Dominguez and losing to all of Yu Yangyi, Ding Liren and blitz expert Sergey Karjakin, the last two of whom finished the day leading on 6½/9.

Not for the first time in a GCT event, the Blitz had really shaken up the overall standings. Vachier-Lagrave now found himself out in front on 17½/27, followed by Aronian (17), Ding Liren (16½) and Yu Yangyi (15½). Guest commentator Kasparov remarked that "It is unbelievable to see the kind of blunders these guys are making! [They] are playing way too much." It will be interesting to see if we get to see a slimmed-down Tour or at least one with significantly different personnel next year.

Two players who do deserve their place in the Tour are good friends Aronian and Vachier-Lagrave. And when did you last see a quick draw between them? The Frenchman won both head-to-head blitz games, but otherwise had a disappointing final day, making just '-1' to slip out of the overall reckoning. Meanwhile Aronian had carried out his game plan of playing "Fast throughout the day", while focussing on keeping the initiative.

Entering the 18th and final round, Aronian found himself a point ahead of Yu, with Ding and Vachier-Lagrave a further half point in arrears. However, despite having the white pieces, Aronian was again destroyed by Vachier-Lagrave, which gave Yu Yangyi a golden chance, but after missing a study-like win in a bishop ending he had to settle for second equal. Can you spot the win?

Yu Yangyi-S.Mamedyarov
Round 18



Back when White's king was on h4, Black might have placed his on h6, but he didn't and

Levon Aronian won the St. Louis Rapid & Blitz for a second time, having also done so in 2017.

is now lost. The winning method: 53 ♔h7! ♗f7 54 ♗g2 ♗e6 55 ♗h1! ♗f7 56 ♗f3 (zugzwang!) 56...♗e6 57 ♗h5 ♗d7 58 ♔g8 ♗a4 (or 58...♗c6 59 ♔f8 ♔e6 60 ♔g7 ♗b7 61 ♗f7+ ♔e7 62 ♔g6 ♗c6 63 ♗g8 and a pawn falls) 59 ♗f7 ♗c6 60 ♔f8 ♗b7 61 ♗h5 ♗c6 62 ♗f3 ♗b7 (62...♔e6 63 ♗e2 ♔f6 64 ♗h5 transposes) 63 ♗e2! (arguably the hardest move to spot) 63...♗c6 64 ♗h5 ♔e6 65 ♗f7+ ♔f6 66 ♗g8 (another zugzwang) 66...♗b7 67 ♔e8 and the rampant white king will soon win material. Instead, the game concluded:

53 ♗h5 ♗g8 54 ♗e8 ♗e6 55 ♔h7 ♔e7 56 ♗b5 ♔f6 57 ♗c6 ♔f7 58 ♔h6 ♔f6 59 ♗e8 ♔e7 60 ♗b5 ♔f6 61 ♗c6 ♗f7 62 ♗d7 ♗g8 63 ♔h5 ♗f7+ 64 ♔h4?

64 ♔h6 ♗g8 65 ♗e8 was still winning, alongside similar lines to above.

64...♗g6 65 ♗c6 ♗f7 66 ♗b7 ♗e6? 67 ♔h5 ♗f7+ 68 ♔h6 ♗e6 69 ♔h7 ♔f7 70 ♗c6 ♔f6 71 ♗e8 ♔e7 72 ♗b5 ½-½

And a draw was agreed, with the intricate winning manoeuvre evidently beyond both exhausted players.

A relieved Aronian thereby bagged 13 GCT points and $37,500, as Yu Yangyi, Ding Liren and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave collected 8.33 points and $20,000 each...and just three days later the Sinquefield Cup began.

Anand's Almosts

He was the only player to win in the opening round and the joint leader right up until the penultimate round, but by then Vishy Anand might well have been on far more than '+1'. As he admitted, "It is the first tournament where I am completely gutted with my '+1'. Normally you will be happy, but with my positions Magnus would have made '+6'."

Anand opened his Sinquefield Cup account by displaying fine endgame technique to outplay the fast-moving Nepomniachtchi, although the Russian was on the safe side of a draw right up until the final move.

I.Nepomniachtchi-V.Anand
Round 1

White would, of course, like to go 77 a6?, but this loses to 77...♘c7+ 78 ♔b6 bxa6!. The only way to draw was to remain active with 77 ♔c5!, and if 77...♘c3 (77...♖d7 78 ♖a8 ♔f5 79 a6 also forces matters, and if 79...b6+ 80 ♔c6 ♔e6 81 ♖e8+) 78 ♔b4 ♖c7 79 a6 ♘d5+ 80 ♔b5, liquidating to rook against rook and knight. Nepomniachtchi had the right idea, but would tragically pick the wrong square for his king:

77 ♔c4?? b5+!

Of course, 78 axb6 ♘xb6+ comes with check, thereby costing White his rook.

The 14th world champion was the sole winner until Caruana joined him in the lead after the fourth round, as Anand failed to make much of a pawn-up queen ending against Wesley So. The very next round saw Anand once again play near-flawless chess and demonstrate good preparation to comfortably hold Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 c3 ♘f6 5 d3 d6 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 h6 8 ♖e1 a5 9 d4 ♗a7 10 h3 g5!? giving Black sufficient counterplay with 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 14 ♗xf7 g4.

It was after the rest day that things began to go wrong for the Indian legend. A pawn up with a strong centre to boot against Anish Giri, he was arguably too keen to exchange queens and then allowing the Dutch no.1 a powerful pawn break to liquidate into a defensible ending. The very next round Ding Liren was to make a major oversight:

Ding Liren-V.Anand
Round 7

17 ♗h3? ♖c6 18 ♕b3 ♘b6

This was clearly missed by Ding and now

Saint Louis Rapid 2019 (Category 22, average rating = 2782 Elo)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Levon Aronian	ARM	2765	*	1	½	½	0	1	1	1	½	1	6.5	2946
2	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2778	0	*	1	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	6.5	2944
3	Ding Liren	CHN	2805	½	0	*	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	5	2817
4	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2752	½	½	0	*	0	½	1	½	1	1	5	2825
5	Richard Rapport	HUN	2747	1	0	½	1	*	0	0	½	0	1	4	2740
6	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2882	0	1	0	½	1	*	0	0	1	½	4	2724
7	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2818	0	0	½	0	1	1	*	½	½	½	4	2730
8	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2750	0	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	0	1	4	2738
9	Leinier Dominguez Perez	USA	2763	½	0	½	0	1	0	½	1	*	0	3.5	2700
10	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2764	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	0	1	*	2.5	2613

19 ♗xc8 ♘c4! would leave White in some trouble, as shown by 20 ♗xb7 ♘xd2 21 ♕a3 ♖xc1 22 ♖xc1 ♗xf4 23 gxf4 e3. As such, the Chinese no.1 desperately jettisoned an exchange.

19 ♗xa5 ♗xh3 20 ♘xh3 ♕c8! 21 ♔g2 ♖xc1

The obvious choice, but with White's king clearly uncomfortable, it's perhaps no surprise that if Black, having found a good move, had remembered Lasker's dictum and looked for a better one, then he would have obtained a decisive attack with 21...♘c4! 22 ♗b4 ♘g4.

22 ♖xc1 ♕xc1 23 ♗xb6 e3 24 f3 h5 25 ♗a5 h4 26 gxh4 ♕c6

Thus far Anand has conducted things well, but why retreat the queen? The obvious move 26...♖e6 would have left White's king unlikely to survive, and it transpires that 26...♘e4! 27 fxe4 ♖xe4 is even more brutal, and if 28 ♕xd5 ♖g4+ 29 ♔f3 ♕h1+.

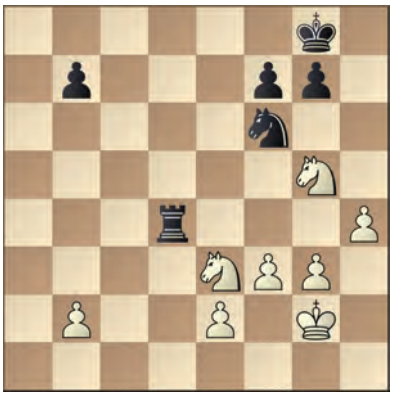
27 ♗e1! ♘h5

Now White sets up a fairly effective defence. It's never easy to admit one's mistakes, but the strongest option was to return the queen: 27...♕c1!, and if 28 ♗g3 (or 28 ♕c3 ♕d1) 28...♗xg3 29 hxg3 ♕e1 30 ♕c2 ♘h5, mating.

28 ♗g3 ♕c4?!

Rather milquetoast. 28...♗xg3 29 hxg3 ♕c1 was still the way to go, when 30 ♕b4! (White must cover e1 and a4) 30...♖c8 31 ♘g5 ♕c4 32 ♕xc4 ♖xc4 33 f4 ♖xa4 34 ♔f3 ♖a1 would have given Black an improved version of the game.

29 ♕xc4 dxc4 30 ♘g5 ♘f6 31 ♘a3 ♗xg3 32 hxg3 ♖a8 33 ♘xc4 ♖xa4 34 ♘xe3 ♖xd4



All the exchanges have helped White, but Black is clearly still pressing and Anand had no doubt been relying on obtaining a passed b-pawn.

35 ♔f2 ♘d5 36 ♘f5 ♖b4 37 h5 ♖xb2 38 h6! f6 39 ♘e4 gxh6 40 ♘xh6+ ♔f8 41 ♘f5 b5 42 ♘e3 ♘b6

It's hard to see how Black makes any progress after 42...♘xe3 43 ♔xe3 ♖c2 44 ♔d3 ♖c6 45 g4 b4 46 ♘d2 ♔e7 47 e3.

43 ♔e1

White's plan is to tie Black's pieces down to the defence of his pawn once it reaches b3. Possibly 43 ♘xf6 b4 44 ♘e4 b3 45 ♘c3 ♖d2 46 ♔e1 ♖d8 is drawn, but allowing the king to be cut off so with the knights still on feels rather risky.

43...b4 44 ♔d1

44...♘a4?

Allowing White's knight access to d5 was not wise. Undoubtedly Anand wasn't sure how to win after 44...b3 45 ♘d2, but 45...f5! (45...♘a4 46 ♘d5 is the game) 46 f4 (46 ♘xf5 ♘d5 47 ♔e1 ♘c3 threatens ...♖xd2 and so forces White to ditch his knight) 46...♘a4 47 ♘d5 (47 ♔e1!? ♘c5 48 ♘xf5 ♖a2 forces White sooner or later into 49 ♘xb3 ♘xb3, when one suspects that Black should be winning, but converting this against White's solid set-up is unlikely to be trivial) 47...♔f7 48 e3 ♘c5 is zugzwang and appears to be winning for Black.

45 ♘d5! f5 46 ♘d2 b3 47 e4 fxe4 48 fxe4 ♔f7 49 g4 ♘c5 50 ♘b4

The star point of Ding's defence and something Anand may well have seen too late. Black's rook is now paralysed and he is unable to break White's fortress.

50...♔e6 51 ♔c1 ♘a4 52 g5 ♔e7 53 ♘c6+ ♔f7 54 ♘d4 ♔g6 55 ♘4xb3 ♖a2 56 ♘f3 ♘c3 57 ♘bd2 ♖xd2 58 ♔xd2 ♘xe4+ 59 ♔e3 ♘xg5 60 ♘xg5 ½-½

How did Vishy Anand win only one game in St. Louis? It was a mystery, if one possibly explained by the hectic schedule of the elite.

Faced with a second successive Black, Anand was arguably too keen to simplify when a pawn up for insufficient compensation against Caruana in the eighth round, even drifting slightly into trouble ahead of making another draw. He would later again find himself a pawn ahead against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, but the still slightly out-of-sorts Azeri counterattacked well to drum up sufficient counterplay.

Draw Fest

Even before the Sinquefield Cup, many were of the opinion that the Grand Chess Tour could do with a major overhaul, if only to prevent the same players facing each other countless times each year and with 50% or even '-1' guaranteeing a decent prize in many of the Tour events. Surely only by freshening things up might we again see a player, like Fabiano Caruana, dazzle their way to 7/7 at the Sinquefield Cup or two players pull clear of the pack and duel all the way to the line?

It's easy to point a finger at Nakamura's lack of ambition at classical chess these days – the speed demon strangely threw away a drawn bishop endgame against Nepomniachtchi and drew the rest, although he did press for some 93 moves against Karjakin – but both Mamedyarov and the winner of the St. Louis Rapid and Blitz, Levon Aronian, also drew all their games. Not only are the top players facing each other too much, but they are surely also playing too much, with clear signs of burnout very much evident in Saint Louis. Whatever would Botvinnik make of these players who play far more than 50 games a year?

The simple reality was that after seven rounds of the 2019 Sinquefield Cup only four players had won a game, three of whom shared the lead on '+1', Ding Liren, Vishy Anand and Fabiano Caruana (Nepomniachtchi was the only other winner). That is not to say that all of the games were dull, but at a good half of them were. Kudos then to Caruana, who displayed good preparation and then practical play to defeat Aronian, whilst being happy to spice it up against the Najdorfs of Nepomniachtchi and Vachier-Lagrave – the latter drew an endgame two exchanges down, but where he had three extra pawns and a strong centre as compensation. Caruana wasn't the only player to catch the eye. In his own quiet way, Ding was also quite impressive and certainly took his chances well.

Ding Liren-A.Giri
Round 5

Black is overextended on the kingside and White would now exploit his superior coordination.

33 c5! a5

Black doesn't want to allow White a protected passed pawn and 33...♖xc5? drops the exchange to 34 ♘b6 ♖8c7 35 ♘d7.

34 b4 axb4

34...a4? 35 ♘c3! should be winning for White, as exemplified by 35...♖b8 36 ♖d8+ ♔g7? 37 ♖xb8 ♕xb8 38 ♕a1 ♔g8 39 ♘xb5! ♕xb5 40 ♖d8+ ♔h7 41 ♖h8# (Pein).

35 ♕xb4 ♖b8 36 ♘b6!

Once again taking full advantage of the potential fork on d7.

36...♗e6

And now for the Kasparovian hammer blow:

37 ♘d7!! ♗xd7 38 ♖d5 ♕e7 39 ♖xd7 ♕xc5 40 ♕b3+

White has given up his pride and joy on c5, but Black will not be able to satisfactorily wriggle out of the checks.

40...♕c4 41 ♕b2 ♕c3 42 ♕a2+ ♖c4

42...♕c4 43 ♕a7 is a killer.

43 g3!

Creating some luft. The arrival of the second rook into the attack will prove decisive.

43...♖bc8 44 ♖1d6 ♔f8 45 ♖xg6 b4 46 ♖xh6 f4 47 gxf4 1-0

Never Write Off Magnus

Round 8 saw not one, but two decisive games. Karjakin displayed fine technique to take advantage of Vachier-Lagrave forgetting his preparation and Nepomniachtchi outplayed Aronian to join Anand, Caruana and Ding in the lead on '+1'. The world champion meanwhile drew his eighth game in a row, but whilst Carlsen had still looked a little shaky in the early rounds, by now he was back in first gear and just unlucky that his opponents kept playing well.

In the sixth round Carlsen had blitzed out some critical and unusually sharp preparation against Nepomniachtchi's Grünfeld, heading straight into an unbalanced queen against rooks middlegame, but Black defended well. As Magnus said with a shrug, "Nothing I could do there. I tried fairly, but he seems very well prepared. I couldn't see anything to fight for an advantage." His preparation was even more impressive for the big clash which occurred two rounds later.

M.Carlsen-Ding Liren
Round 8
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗g5 c5 6 ♖c1 h6 7 ♗h4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 d5 9 cxd5 g5!

Taking up the challenge, rather than seemingly suffer in a slightly worse position after 9...♕xd5 10 ♗xf6 gxf6 11 a3. Now the game really kicks off.

10 ♗g3 ♕xd5 11 e3! ♕xa2 12 ♕c2 ♘d5 13 h4 ♘xc3 14 bxc3!?

Carlsen blitzed out this at first sight surprising novelty. He wants to attack, but is happy to first trade the queens. Previously 14 hxg5 ♘a4+ 15 ♔d1 ♕xb2 16 ♕xb2 ♘xb2+ 17 ♔c2 hxg5 18 ♔xb2 ♗e7 19 ♗d3! ♘d7 20 ♖h6 ♗f6 21 ♖c7 had left White with sufficient compensation and a repetition imminent in Nechaeva-Kovanova, Yaroslavl 2018.

14...♕xc2 15 ♖xc2 ♗e7 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 f4 ♘c6 18 fxg5 ♗xg5 19 ♖h5

Continuing to strive to open lines and can you spot how 19...♗xe3 is refuted? After 20 ♘xc6 bxc6 21 ♖e2 ♗c1 22 ♔d1! Black is simply lost in view of 22...♗a3 23 ♖g5+ ♔h7 24 ♖e4 ♔h6 25 ♗f4.

19...f6! 20 ♘f3!

It won't be mate, but this pawn sacrifice to lift in almost *AlphaZero* fashion the second rook into the attack is still very dangerous.

20...♗xe3 21 ♖e2 ♗c1! 22 ♖e4

Here we go... Instead, an important benefit of Black's 19th would have become clear after 22 ♔d1? ♗a3 23 ♖e4 ♖f7.

22...e5

22...♗b2!? is touted by the engines, but over the board with the clock ticking there is much which might have concerned Ding here, including 23 ♔d2 ♗a3 24 ♖g4+ ♔f7 25 ♖h7+ ♔e8 26 ♖gg7.

23 ♗c4+

An extremely sharp position has arisen and yet this was the first move which Carlsen spent any real time on, reflecting his impressive preparation.

23...♔g7 24 ♖eh4 ♔g6!

Superb defence from Ding. Walking the king up the board is counterintuitive, but now ♖h7 doesn't come with check and Black will at last be able to develop his bishop from c8.

25 ♖h7

As White doesn't seem to have anything

A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

David Howell - @DavidHowellGM
Huge congrats to Ding Liren for winning the Sinquefield Cup. Very impressive speed skills and calculation! But has anybody noticed that Magnus could have claimed a 3-fold repetition in the 1st blitz game, just before he lost on time? #STLCC #blitzishard

2700chess - @2700chess
Carlsen is no longer World Blitz #1, but Nakamura who did not take part in #STLRapidBlitz. Vachier-Lagrave was Blitz #1 on the FIDE August list, but dropped 185 blitz rating points.

Gawain Jones - @GMGawain
A fantastic team performance from Sestao to again return from Linares with the silverware, albeit this time in the second division. Felt very rusty initially, but ended on a solid 5.5/7. Expect it to be somewhat cooler at my next event.

Anish Giri - @anishgiri
Off to Khanty-Mansiysk. I may tweet something in case I win it, or if one of my colleagues misbehaves again, but for all other (meaningless) updates, do follow my instagram account instead. #chessworldcup

Susan Polgar - @SusanPolgar
Very sad news! :-(Just heard that my dear friend GM Pal Benko died at 91. After missing each other for weeks due to our schedules, I finally was able to visit him and his wife last week. He still sent me email after I came home. RIP! Very sad day for chess! @USChess @FIDE_chess

International Chess Federation - @FIDE_chess
Chess master, writer, chess columnist for various newspapers, organizer Leonard Barden is the legend of English chess. And he turns 90 today! Our congratulations!

Liang Ziming - @sinotahl
Today, we saw a friendly mixed double tournament between Chess grandmasters and local women entrepreneurs. Such friendly tournament was held several times in Shenzhen in the past years, which is very good for chess promotion and popularization.

Jonathan Manley - @KingpinEd
Nigel Davies once observed that club players seeking to improve should study the games of Mark Hebden rather than super-grandmasters. Sadler/Regan, *Game Changer* (2019), p.363.

clear after this, it was later suggested that he should have switched to subtle manoeuvring with 25 ♗d3+!? ♔f7 26 ♗f2.

25...♗g4! 26 ♗d3+ f5

And not 26...♗f5?? 27 ♖4h5! ♗xd3 28 ♘h4#.

27 ♘xe5+ ♘xe5 28 ♗xe5 ♔g5

Onward, bold Sir Lancelot! Now White might have renewed the mate threat with 29 ♖h1!? and after 29...♖g8 tried 30 ♔f2, retaining the tension and his compensation. Instead, Carlsen understandably decided it was high time to pick off something on the queenside, but doing so merely allowed the game to rapidly fizzle out.

29 g3 ♖g8 30 ♖xb7 ♖ae8 31 ♖b5 ♖g6 32 ♔f2 ♖b6 33 ♖xb6 axb6 34 ♖h1 ♖xe5 35 ♖xc1 f4 36 gxf4+ ♔xf4 37 ♖b1 ♖c5 38 ♖b4+ ♔g5 39 ♖xb6 ♖xc3 40 ♔e3 ♗f5 41 ♖d6 ♖xd3+ 42 ♖xd3 ♗xd3 ½-½

Carlsen was undoubtedly frustrated by Ding's fine defence, admitting that the "Situation [was] getting more dire by the day". His frustration would mount the next day as he squandered a big chance in the early middlegame against Aronian, while Ding inflicted on Caruana his first defeat and in a game which one could easily imagine had been played in a K-K match.

Ding Liren-F.Caruana
Round 9

White is undoubtedly pressing, having invaded the back rank and got his pawn up to a6, but how to break the solid black defences? Ding decided it was high time to up the ante.

31 f4!? ♖d2

We know Ding Liren as being very hard to beat, as well as well prepared and possessing good technique, but his wins against Caruana and Giri were almost Kasparovian in their prosecution.

The active choice, but simpler would have been 31...♘d7!, and if 32 ♘c4? ♖xc8 33 ♘xa5 ♖xc1+.

32 ♕f3 ♖2d5 33 ♖1c7! ♔h7?!

Caruana is a great defender and a superb calculator, but this position was too much even for him. The text plans a crafty indirect defence of f7, but Black might have forced matters: 33...♕xa6! 34 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 35 ♖xf7 ♕a1+ 36 ♔h2 ♕e1. If 37 ♕b7 there's 37...♘h5, but 37 f5 looks rather dangerous, and yet there is a defence: 37...♕a1! (exploiting the downside to White's last; 37...exf5? 38 ♕xf5 ♖d1 39 ♖xg7+! leads to mate and 37...♖d1? 38 ♖xf6! gxf6 39 ♕a8+ is also terminal) 38 ♕g3 g5! (once again the only move, in view of 38...♘h5? 39 ♖xg7+! ♘xg7 40 f6) 39 ♖xf6 (39 fxg6? ♖d1 is even winning for Black) 39...♖d1 and due to the counterattack, White must bail out with 40 ♖g6+ ♔h7 41 ♖xh6+! ♔xh6 42 ♘g4+ ♔h7 43 ♕c7+ ♕g7 44 ♘f6+ ♔h6 45 ♘g4+ ♔h7.

34 ♔h2!

"Anything you can do, I can do better," says Ding, as he avoids 34 ♘xf7? ♕e1+ 35 ♔h2 ♖d1 36 ♘xd8 ♕g1+ 37 ♔g3 ♕e1+ and perpetual.

34...♖xc8 35 ♖xc8 ♕xa6 36 ♖a8!?

A good practical choice, as the pawn-up queen ending is surely drawn after 36 ♖f8 ♘d7 37 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 38 ♕e4+ f5 39 ♖xf5! exf5! 40 ♕xf5+ ♕g6 41 ♕xd7 a5.

36...♕b7 37 ♖f8 ♖b5?

The key mistake, but 37...♕b4! 38 ♖xf7 ♕b1! is not at all easy for even the best humans to spot. The machine's clever point is that 39 ♖xa7 ♖d1 40 ♘g4 ♖h1+ 41 ♔g3 ♕g6! holds the balance.

38 ♕f1!

Heading for d3.

38...♕d5 39 ♘xf7 ♘d7

Forced to prevent 40 ♖h8+ ♔g6 41 ♘e5+.

40 ♖d8 ♖b8

Thanks to this Caruana is alive, but he remains far from a draw as White will continue to dominate the board.

41 ♖xb8 ♘xb8 42 ♕b1+ ♕f5 43 ♕b7! ♘c6 44 ♘d6 ♕c5

Another only move as it becomes clear that Black will do extremely well to hold both his queenside and kingside together.

45 ♘e4 ♕c2?

Now it's definitely lost. The radical 45...♕xe3! 46 ♕xc6 ♕xf4+ 47 g3 ♕e5 should be too, but would have made White have to work longer for the win.

46 ♘f6+ ♔g6 47 ♘e8 ♕c3 48 e4!

The arrival of this pawn will break the defence.

48...a5 49 ♕d7 a4 50 ♕xe6+ ♔h7 51 e5

Threatening to mate via 52 ♕g7. Black's a-pawn is too slow to save him.

51...♘d4 52 ♕d7 ♔g6 53 ♕xg7+ ♔f5 54 ♘d6+! ♔xf4 55 ♕f6+ ♔e3 56 e6 ♔d3 57 e7 1-0

That did not, however, make Ding the sole leader on '+2', as Nepomniachtchi ground down So in some 132 moves as Black. The American was holding a pawn-down queen endgame for a long time, but eventually collapsed as the time control of 130 minutes with a 30-second delay per move, which meant that one couldn't build

Hikaru Nakamura remains very popular online, as Danny Rosenbaum shows later in these pages, but he continues to look like a player merely going through the motions at classical chess.

up time as with an increment, took its toll.

A point behind and with only two to play, Carlsen looked up against it, but one must never, ever write off the world champion who would win 'on demand' with a vintage display.

M.Carlsen-W.So
Round 10
Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 0-0 ♘f6 5 d3 00 6 c3 d6 7 h3 h6 8 ♖e1 a6 9 a4 a5 10 ♘bd2 ♗e6 11 ♗b5

A fashionable and important line.

11...♘a7 12 d4 ♘xb5 13 dxc5 ♘a7 14 b3 ♖e8 15 cxd6 ♕xd6 16 ♗a3 c5 17 ♘c4!?

Not the first choice of the traditional engines, but everywhere these days Carlsen appears full of new ideas. 17 ♕e2 is less radical and after 17...b6 18 ♘c4 ♗xc4 19 ♕xc4 (Vachier-Lagrave-Karjakin, Saint Louis (blitz) 2018) 19...♕c6 Black is rock solid.

17...♕xd1 18 ♖axd1 ♗xc4 19 bxc4 b6 20 ♘h4 ♖ad8 21 f3 g6 22 g3!

White's queenside may look a mess, but b6 is as weak as c4 and, as Carlsen had realised, White can regroup his bishop. Moreover, examine the central squares and the point of White's last becomes clear: his knight is bound for d5, whereas Black can never land a piece on d4.

22...♘h5

This achieves little, so probably Black should have preferred to regroup with 22...♘c8 23 ♘g2 ♖xd1 24 ♖xd1 ♖e7.

23 ♔f2 ♘c6?

23...♘c8! was still indicated, and if 24 ♘g2 ♘d6 25 ♘e3 f5, creating counterplay just in the nick of time.

24 ♗c1 ♔g7 25 ♗e3!

Clearing a path to b1 for the remaining white rook.

25...♖xd1 26 ♖xd1 ♖d8 27 ♖b1 ♖b8 28 ♘g2 ♘f6 29 ♔e2 ♘e8 30 ♗f2!

Simple, yet very strong – the knight is heading for touchdown.

30...♘d6 31 ♘e3 ♘e7

So bad are matters that the engines prefer to ditch a pawn with 31...♘d8!? 32 ♘d5 ♘e6 33 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 34 ♘xb6.

32 ♘d5

32...♘xd5

Not at all what Black wanted to play, but how else to hold the queenside in view of 32...♘ec8 33 ♗xc5 ♘xc4 34 ♔d3?

33 cxd5 ♖b7 34 ♔d3 f5 35 c4 fxe4+

Carlsen was clearly enjoying himself and would later reveal in the commentary that on 35...♔f6 he was planning 36 g4 f4 37 ♗e1! g5 38 ♗c3, which is zugzwang.

36 fxe4 ♖f7

Desperation in a lost position.

37 ♖xb6 ♖xf2 38 ♖xd6 ♖f3+ 39 ♔e2 ♖c3 40 ♖e6 ♖xc4 41 ♖xe5 ♖xa4 42 ♖e7+ ♔f6 43 d6 1-0

The connected passed pawns will sweep all before them. A positional tour de force from the champ.

The leaderboard was shaken up too by Vachier-Lagrave scoring his first victory. Nepomniachtchi had a handy lead in development and full compensation for a pawn, but whether too keen to win or just again moving too quickly, played a horrendously ambitious 21st move and immediately found himself lost. And so Ding found himself the sole leader on 6/10, hotly pursued by Anand, Karjakin, Nepomniachtchi and especially Carlsen.

If anyone was nervous come the final round, it was Ding who was quickly forced into a slightly inferior rook endgame as White against Mamedyarov. He was to be trumped though by Caruana, who quickly found himself clearly worse as White, but was able to battle back to hold as Karjakin missed a few chances to make more of his extra pawn. Anand meanwhile never got anywhere against Nakamura's Berlin Wall, while Nepomniachtchi misjudged an early tactical skirmish and found himself a pawn down against Giri. He appeared to have done all the hard work and to be about to hold a three versus four rook ending, only to blitz one move too many...and lose.

Whilst those around him were losing their heads, the world champion did not. Carlsen must have been delighted with 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 g6 4 ♗xc6 bxc6 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♕xd4 f6 7 0-0 d6 8 c4 c5 9 ♕d3 ♗g7 10 b3 ♘h6 to dodge any major preparation from Vachier-Lagrave whilst reaching just the type of complex, manoeuvring middlegame in which he excels. Nevertheless, matters remained most unclear until White blundered after just 21 moves.

As Carlsen admitted that forcing a play-off for first place felt "surreal", it was hard not to feel that by the closing round, if not long before, many of the other GCT players were simply exhausted. There was also the matter of too many draws: some 53 of the 66 games were drawn. While nobody wants to see too many quick draws, ironically allowing the players to offer them might reduce tiredness and lead to fewer draws overall. Reinstating a time control (or two) could also help, not least with reducing the number of poorly played endgames. As Caruana pointed out, "Because we are playing so much [...] players are not at their freshest, and that leads to shaky technique."

Astonishingly Magnus Carlsen had won every play-off he had been in since 2007 – we must never lose sight of just how strong he is – and so was a clear favourite against Ding Liren, but the Carlsen who turned up the

day after round 11 wasn't the Carlsen who had finished the Sinquefield Cup so strongly, but rather the one who had begun it so diffidently. Carlsen was quickly worse as White in their first rapid game, but manage to draw and then to comfortably hold the return.

The blitz was a different story. Ding quickly gained the upper hand as White and found himself with a huge advantage in a rook and opposite-coloured bishop endgame. However, he missed several fairly simple wins and it appeared that Carlsen would hold until he somehow lost on time on move 87, despite the three-second delay. That meant that the world champion again had to win on demand, and this time it wasn't to be.

M.Carlsen-Ding Liren
Play-off, Game 3 (blitz) 2019

Ding has boldly just captured on e4 and after 32 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 33 ♕xa3 ♗h4 34 ♕xa6 d5 Black should have sufficient compensation.

32 g5 ♗a8!

This retreat poleaxed Carlsen. No doubt he saw 33 gxf6 ♕b7 34 ♔f1 ♕g2+ (34...♖c2? 35 ♖e2 defends and wins) 35 ♔e2 ♕f3+ 36 ♔f1 (36 ♔d2 ♗d8! is a decisive deflection) 36...♕g2+, but as a draw was no good, he was forced to decline the knight.

33 ♕xa6 ♘d5 34 ♗a7 ♕c7 35 ♖ec1 ♕xc1+

Ding continues to display no fear, although he might have won more simply with 35...♗c6 36 ♖c4 ♕d7 37 ♖ac1 a2!, and if 38 ♕xa2 ♕xh3 39 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 40 ♖xc6 ♘f4.

36 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 37 ♔h2 ♗c6 38 ♕xa3 ♗xg5 39 ♕xd6?

White needed to find 39 ♘e2 when anything might yet have happened after 39...♖e1 40 ♕xd6 ♘e7 41 ♕xe5 ♘f5.

39...♗f4!

Ice calm, having spotted that...

40 ♗c5 ♘e7 0-1

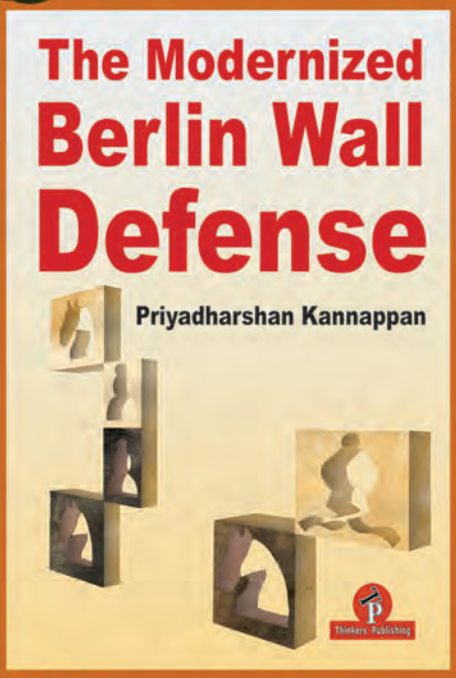
...is an only move, but a deadly one. The threat of mate on h1 decides.

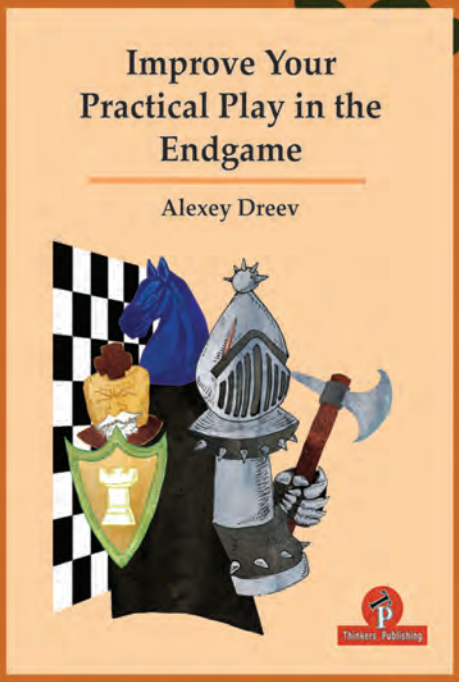
As the champ had to admit, Ding was "A lot better than I was today", and so the Chinese no.1 could enjoy the greatest result of his career, first place at the Sinquefield Cup, which bagged him $82,500. Both Ding and Carlsen pocketed 16.5 GCT points and on the Tour leaderboard Carlsen remains way out in front with 54.5 points. He, Ding (37.8) and Vachier-Lagrave (36.8) will surely qualify for the final four in London, even though the Frenchman has played five events to the other two's four. The Tour heads next to Bucharest and then Kolkata in November, with Aronian lying in fourth, back on 25.5, but as he has played only three events, he must be favourite to claim the final qualifying berth.

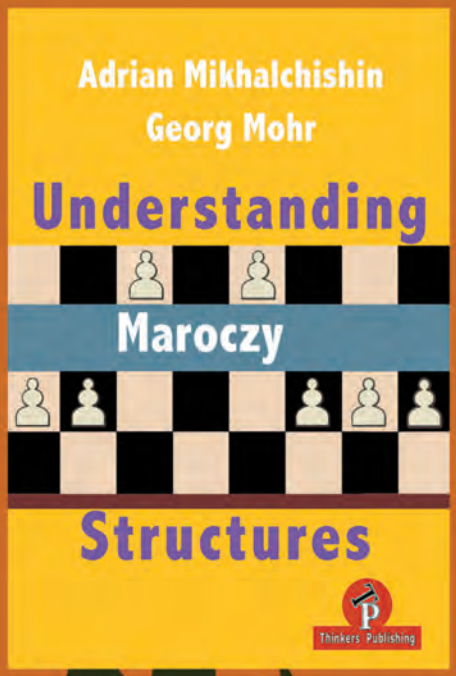
Pictured in front of St. Louis' famous giant chess king, Ding Liren could show off the hardly tiny replica trophy given to the winner of the Sinquefield Cup, as he enjoyed his best result to date.

7th Sinquefield Cup, Saint Louis, USA, 17-30 August 2019 (Category 22, average rating = 2783 Elo)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Pts	TPR
1	Ding Liren	CHN	2805	*	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	½	6½	2845
2	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2882	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	6½	2838
3	Viswanathan Anand	IND	2756	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	6	2820
4	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2750	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	6	2821
5	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2764	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	5½	2784
6	Anish Giri	NED	2779	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	1	½	½	½	½	5½	2782
7	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2818	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	5½	2779
8	Ian Nepomniachtchi	RUS	2774	½	½	0	½	½	0	½	*	1	0	1	1	5½	2783
9	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2743	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	5	2750
10	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2778	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	½	½	5	2746
11	Levon Aronian	ARM	2765	½	½	½	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	4½	2719
12	Wesley So	USA	2776	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	4½	2718







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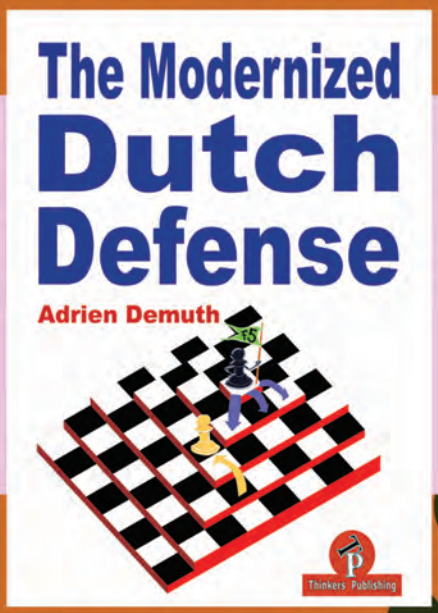

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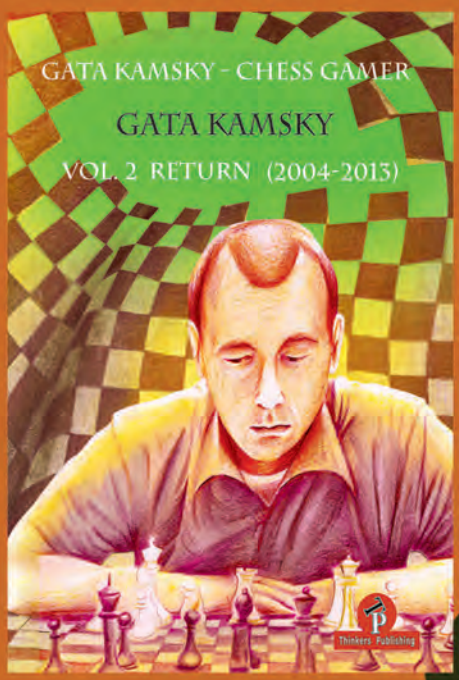
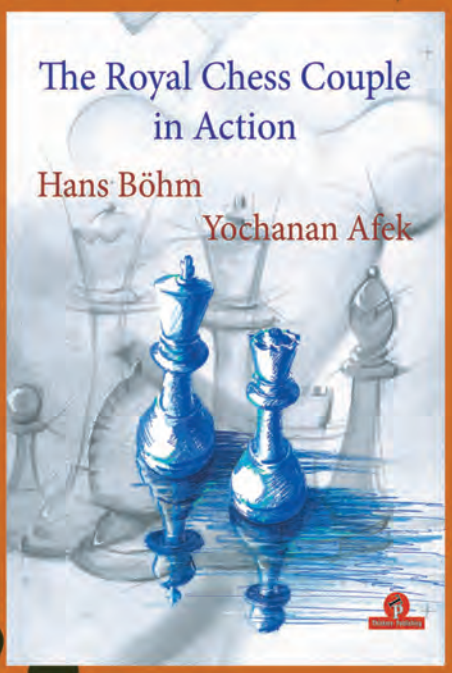
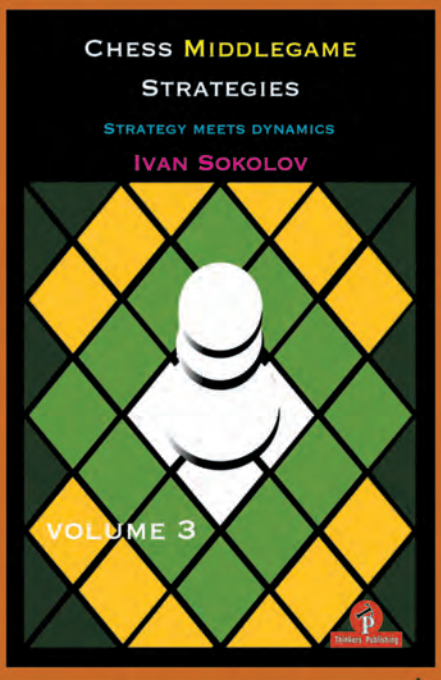






It's Chess Jim, but not as we know it

Some chess players go abroad in the summer, others to the British, but Matthew Sadler was happy to try the variety of chess on offer at the Mind Sports Olympiad

For a chess addict, the summer holidays are where work stops, and serious work begins. At last, some proper time to study and play chess! There are several traditional ways of satisfying your chess obsession during this period. The British Championships are the obvious choice, but 9 days at a British seaside resort is not necessarily the best option to keep your family happy *every* single year. Judging from my Facebook friends, a very popular choice is to take your family somewhere nice, but to pack lots of thick opening books to study while the family enjoys itself.

There is, however, a third offbeat option, and that is the Mind Sports Olympiad (MSO), held this year in London from August 18th-26th. The MSO is an international games competition bringing competitors together from all over the world. Conceived in 1997 by Ray Keene, Tony Buzan and David Levy, the first four events – held at locations such as the Royal Festival Hall and Alexandra Palace – were amazing occasions attracting exceptionally strong fields in many different games. For example, I played the blitz tournament in 1997 and ended up facing Michael Adams, Julian Hodgson, Bogdan Lalic, Luke McShane, John Emms, Keith Arkell and quite a few IMs too – not a bad field! I came second in that event to Mickey, with this crazy game played in the fourth round proving to be very important for the final standings.

M.Sadler-M.Adams
London (blitz) 1997
French Defence

1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7

I think we were both slightly surprised to be playing this line. I normally met 1...e6 with 2 c4, while I don't think I've ever seen Mickey play the Winawer. We both make quite a good job of it though.

7 ♕g4 ♔f8 8 dxc5 ♘d7 9 ♘f3 ♕c7 10 ♗e2 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 12 0-0 ♕xc3 13 ♖b1 e5 14 ♕h5 f6 15 f4 ♕xc5+ 16 ♔h1 e4 17 c4

17...g6 18 ♕h6+ ♔f7 19 cxd5 ♘f5 20 ♕h3 h5 21 ♖b5 ♕d6 22 ♕c3 b6 23 a4 ♗a6 24 ♗a3 ♖ac8 25 ♕b3 ♕d7 26 d6+ ♔g7 27 ♖xf5 ♗xe2 28 ♖xf6 ♗xf1

29 ♗b2

29 f5 was the best continuation, as my engine points out, due to the neat tactical point 29...♔xf6 30 ♗b2+ ♔xf5 31 ♕h3+, picking up the queen.

29...♗c4 30 ♕g3 ♕g4

I still remember being shocked about this one. I'd completely missed this defence.

31 ♕e1 ♔h7 32 h3 ♕d7 33 f5 g5 34 ♕d1 ♗f7 35 ♕d4 ♖hg8 36 ♕xe4 ♖ce8 37 ♕d3 h4 38 ♔h2 a6 39 ♗c3 b5 40 axb5 axb5 41 ♖e6 ♖xe6 42 fxe6+ ♗g6 43 ♕d5 ♕c8 44 ♗e5 ♕c4 45 ♕xc4 bxc4 46 d7 ♗f5 47 ♗f6 ♗xe6 48 d8♕ ♖xd8 49 ♗xd8

In this drawn position, I unfortunately lost on time (**0-1**).

The MSO is now run on a much smaller scale, but still boasts a strong international field. In particular, the all-round gamers – players who can play many different games at a high level – are extremely strong and the Pentamind Championship – won by the player who scores the five best results in a variety of games – is still a very prestigious title.

The leaderboard of Pentamind victories is headed by none other than Demis Hassabis (5 victories), the CEO of DeepMind who created *AlphaZero*, but in recent years the major contenders have been the Estonian Andres Kuusk (4 victories), and the Englishmen Ankush Khandelwal and James Happel (3 and 2 victories apiece). Like many of the best gamers, they are good chess players: Andres has a FIDE rating of 2097 and won the Chess Puzzles event; James, a former captain of the England under-12 team, is rated 2046; and Ankush has a FIDE rating of 2228 and came second in the Rapid event, which won by IM John-Paul Wallace.

My co-author of *Game Changer*, WIM Natasha Regan, is a complete games addict and plays pretty much everything. She showed her wide range of skills by scoring a bronze in the complex abstract game Twixt, as well as in the more social Monopoly. She also took the bronze medal in the overall Women's Pentamind competition, finishing 22nd out of about 500 competitors. Whilst I don't have Natasha's amazing facility to learn a game in the morning and play it at a high level in the afternoon, I was also feeling the *Game Changer* spirit, so decided to change my games with the 'crazy chess' events: this year it was Chess Variants, Chess960, the fantastic Colour Chess, and Exchange Chess.

Chess Variants featured a medley of weird and wonderful chess variants, such as Knight Relay chess, Atomic chess and the rather obscene Monster Chess. I simply cannot get my head around this one:

These are rules:

White is to move;

White makes two moves on each turn; Black makes just a single move on each turn;

The white king can move into check on the first move of the turn and move out of check during the second move;

White may promote a pawn, but Black may not promote;

There is no check, and a player wins by capturing their opponent's king.

The basic idea as White is to use your pawns to make inroads into the black position, and then use those channels to bring your own king within capturing range of the black king. It sounds ridiculous, but I never managed to defend Black's position against strong players.

The next event I played in was Chess960. I have a love-hate relationship with this chess variant. I understand the cleverness of the idea in eliminating the value of opening preparation, but I do object to the feeling of disgust I normally experience around move 10: 'What on earth is my bishop doing there?'. Despite being billed as the UK Championship, the event was not well attended this year and the main competition came from Russian GM Alexander Cherniaev. Our fourth round meeting determined first place in the tournament.

The game started from this position.

A.Cherniaev-M.Sadler
Chess960, London 2019

After the opening moves **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 d6** we quickly ended up in some sort of Ruy Lopez Breyer structure. We pick up the game again after about 16 moves:

My pieces seemed to have reached fairly reasonable positions for a Ruy Lopez, so now seemed like a good moment for the typical ...d5 break.

1...d5 2 exd5 cxd5 3 dxe5 ♘xe5 4 h3

Black has an isolated queen's pawn, but White's Chess960 bishop on a1 is still looking fairly miserable. As long as I didn't allow a sudden break with c3-c4, I felt I should be on top.

4...♕c7 5 ♗b1 ♖cd8 6 ♘f5 g6 7 ♘d4 a6 8 ♗b2 ♗b7 9 ♖e2 ♗c5 10 ♖fe1 ♗d6

With a little bit of tidying-up, my position now looks completely normal, and it felt much more natural to play from here.

11 ♘f1 ♘e4 12 ♖e3 ♘d7 13 f3 ♘ef6

Having spent so much time analysing *AlphaZero* games, a weakening of the kingside with h3 and f3 is something that makes your eyes light up. In my head, all my pieces were making little manoeuvres to settle in on the weakened kingside dark squares.

14 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 15 ♖xe8+ ♘xe8

I turned down a draw around this point.

16 ♕e1 ♘ef6 17 ♗c1 ♗e5 18 ♗e3 ♘h5 19 ♘e2 ♘f8

The knight is rerouting to e6, eyeing the f4-square.

20 g4

A bit wild, as now the f3-pawn is a target for a future ...d5-d4 break.

20...♘f4 21 ♘xf4 ♗xf4 22 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 23 ♕e3 ♕d6

24 ♔f2 ♘e6 25 ♘g3 a5

Aiming to fix the white queenside pawns with a pawn on b4.

26 ♗d3 b4 27 c4 d4 28 ♕d2 ♘c5 29 ♔g2 ♕e5 30 ♘e2 ♗c6 31 ♗c2 ♘e6 32 ♗b1 h5

The last piece of the puzzle: the pawn is coming to h4 to join in the attack on the kingside dark squares.

33 ♗c2 h4 34 ♗d1 ♗xf3+ 0-1

After 35 ♔xf3 ♘g5+ 36 ♔g2 (or 36 ♔f2 ♘e4+) 36 ..♕e4+ 37 ♔f1 ♕f3+ 38 ♔g1 (if 38 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 39 ♔f2 ♘e4#) 38 ..♘xh3+ 39 ♔h2 ♘f2 there's inevitable mate.

The event I was most looking forward to however was Colour Chess. Natasha told me about it after competing in the event last year, and I gave her my best 'I am a grandmaster, I am not impressed' look, but once I was pointed to the free app (available for Android and Apple), I got completely addicted.

This is how the game looks at the start. The chessboard is composed of squares of six different colours: the colour distribution is random, so just like Chess960, there's no opening theory in colour chess. White makes one move to start and thereafter both players have two moves at each turn. The first move is to the colour of the opponent's last move (on the board above, White played on light blue with 1 b3, so Black must play either 1...a5, 1...c5 or 1...g5), and, on the second move, Black can choose which colour to move to. The aim of the game is to capture the opponent's king (there is no check in colour chess). If you cannot move to the colour the opponent has chosen, then you lose that move and go straight on to your second move which is your own colour choice.

It sounds odd, but the way you end up playing is extremely intuitive to chess players (to be honest, I find it much more satisfying than Chess960). You try to put your pieces on good squares with plenty of (colour) options, and you try to run the opponent short of certain colours, so that they either cannot move or must place pieces en prise. You also attempt to advance towards the

World Champions at last! Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan both did well at the MSO.

opponent on colours which limit the usefulness of the opponent's replies. The game can get very complex tactically, and the strategical element is also very important: you must keep track of the colours on which you are strong and weak as it changes continually over the course of the game.

The tournament featured the top three players on the app: me, Natasha and Saravanan Sathyanandha, another good chess player (rated 2143), with grandmaster-level game skills (he finished ninth overall in the Pentamind). After getting past Natasha in round 3, I had a roller-coaster ride in round 4 against Saravanan, getting to rook, bishop and three pawns against rook and two pawns on the same side, only to experience the agony of having to give away my bishop due to a shortage of yellow squares. We played the final stages solely on increment (10 seconds a move), which is undoubtedly one of the most nerve-wracking things I've ever done. In the end, I managed to win rook and two against rook and one by running my opponent short of squares for his rook.

The tournament was billed as the World Championship of Colour Chess, and since Natasha ended up as the top female player (she finished shared third in the tournament, missing out on bronze on tie-break), I guess both *Game Changer* authors can claim we are world champions! It's not quite the world championship I dreamed of as a 7-year old, but almost 40 years later, I'm happy to settle for it! If you're interested in Colour Chess, take a look at www.dogearedgames.com, and check out the free app.

All that remained to conclude my Mind Sports Olympiad crazy chess adventure was to win the Exchange Chess tournament with Natasha, which we managed to do, holding off the mighty Ben Purton and Oliver Gill pairing in the final round. Our technique of me taking as many pieces as possible and Natasha delivering checkmate worked pretty well.

I hope I've managed to convey my enthusiasm both for this games event and, of course, for colour chess, and it would be great to see more chess players turning up and competing next year. Perhaps from that point of view, I should mention IM Graham Buckley's performance in Chinese Chess: after a couple of month's intensive online practice, he managed to get bronze!

From Etan Ilfeld, chief organiser of the Mind Sports Olympiad

The 23rd Mind Sports Olympiad featured over 70 different competitions, including half a dozen chess tournaments. MSO's Pentamind World Championship is awarded annually to the player with the best five scores in a variety of games and was won again by Ankush Khandelwal. Ankush was trailing former champion Andres Kuusk going into the final day, but his gold win in Agricola sealed the deal. Ankush also took gold in backgammon, silver in rapid chess, bronze in Catan, and gold in Triolet.

Highlights included GM Matthew Sadler winning gold in Colour Chess, Chess 960 and Exchange Chess. The Chess Variants tournament was great fun and I was lucky to share gold with Saravanan Sathyanandha followed by Sadler's bronze medal. This year's Memory Champion Andrea Muzii was able to memorise a full deck of cards in 20 seconds – he won all the Memory Olympiads and 9 out of 10 disciplines! Highlights of his incredible feats include memorising 504 normal (standard base 10 digits; e.g. 0-9) in five minutes, and he broke the European record for memorising images in five minutes when he completed 394 images.

Meanwhile, Daniel Holloway defended his Speed Reading Championship title by reading *Starship Alchemon* (a 400-page science fiction paperback to be published in November), in only an hour and ten minutes. Liar's Dice (aka Perudo) was particularly jovial and was won by Daniele Ferri while the Eurogames World Championship was won by Mike Dixon. For a full list of results visit msoworld.com/2019-medal-table/.

There were also a number of new games being demonstrated. A crowd favourite that is due to be included next year is Battle Sheep, which is extremely simple to learn and filled with possibilities. Battle Sheep is highly analytic and would suit most chess players.

The 24th Mind Sports Olympiad will take place in London from August 23rd to 31th, 2020.

Ankush Khandelwal wins the Pentamind flanked by the Estonian duo of Andres Kuusk on the right (silver) and Martin Hobemagi (bronze).

Playing Silly Buggers

At the end of an entertaining scrap, James Plaskett couldn't believe that he messed up one of his favourite endings, with king and two against king and one

This encounter took place on Sunday 18th August 2019 in the seventh and final round of a rapid event in Almeria. Each player had won all six games thus far. The time control was 10 minutes for the entire game, with an additional two seconds donated by the clock after each completed move.

A.Giaccio-J.Plaskett
Almeria (rapid) 2019
Pirc Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 ♘ge2 ♘f6 5 h3 0-0 6 g4

I'd beaten him before in odd fianchetto systems against the Modern, so I hawled out:

6...c5?!

Never again. It was met instantly by...

7 dxc5

...at which point I sank into thought, and came up with what seemed to me the only sensible way to continue.

7...♕a5 8 cxd6 ♘xe4 9 dxe7 ♖e8 10 ♕d5

This was all swiftly produced by my Argentine Grandmaster adversary, who told me afterwards that he had umpteen times reached this tricky line in online blitz games, but nobody had tried what I had seen at the seventh move and now instantly played;

10...♕b4!

He sank into thought for several minutes.

11 ♕d8?

Now White is struggling and, perhaps, already lost.

The straightforward 11 ♕xe4! ♗xc3+ 12 ♘xc3 ♖xe7 13 ♕xe7 ♕xe7+ 14 ♗e3 would have led to White retaining even something of a superiority, with full material compensation for the queen in the form of rook, bishop and a pawn, but, after my gaffe at move six I had to improvise something, so gimme a break!

11...♗d7 12 a3

In retrospect this move was to prove of critical significance. But that would only become apparent after all seven pairs of pieces had vanished from the board...

12...♕c4! 13 ♗d2?

Komodo prefers 13 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 14 ♖g1. It now thinks 14...♕xc2 best and very much in Black's favour, but also comes up with the remarkable suggestion of 14...♘c6!? 15 ♕xd7 ♘d4, proffering the computer line of 16 f3 ♘xf3+ 17 ♔f2 ♘d4.

13...♘xd2 14 0-0-0

This hadn't occurred to me.

On 14 ♔xd2 there is the cute line 14...♘c6! 15 ♕xd7 ♖xe7 16 ♕d6 ♖d8 17 ♘d4 ♗h6+! 18 f4 ♕xd4+ 19 ♕xd4 ♖xd4+ 20 ♗d3 ♗xf4+ 21 ♔d1 ♘e5 22 ♖e1 ♖e6 and the black initiative will triumph.

Incidentally, Giaccio's castling with a black knight at d2 shows him to be more *au fait* with the Laws of Chess than Alexander Beliavsky. At the Tilburg event of 1986, which I attended, he asked arbiter Geurt Gijssen if it was legal for him to castle in a position against Timman which also arose from a Pirc.

And Beliavsky had already twice appeared as a Candidate. Anatoly Karpov had been world champion, but at that same event he made an incorrect claim for a threefold repetition against Miles which Gijssen had to reject as in the first of the positions Miles' rook was unmoved so he would have had the option of queenside castling.

Miles correctly demanded "A five-minute penalty", which almost resulted in Karpov losing on time.

Mark you, in their 1974 match when Karpov himself, playing black, had a bishop attacking Korchnoi´s rook at h1, Viktor asked arbiter O'Kelly whether it was legal for him then to castle. GM O'Kelly assured him that no law forbade it. And that was, since Fischer would later resign his title, in effect a match for the *world* championship.

14...♗c6?

It was, of course, correct to simply carry on eating with 14...♘xf1!. I had nightmares about 15 ♕xe8+ ♗xe8 16 ♖d8, but that may be easily countered, such as by 16...♗h6+ 17 f4 ♗xf4+ 18 ♘xf4 ♕xf4+ 19 ♔b1 ♘a6! 20 ♖xa8 ♘c7, etc. 14...♕c6 would also have won.

15 ♖xd2 ♘d7?

Returning a bit too much material.

The obvious 15...♕e6 never occurred to me. It looks as though, what with White having the wacky option of 16 ♖d6 ♕e5 17 ♗g2!? ♗f6 18 ♖xf6! ♕xf6 19 ♕xe8+! ♗xe8 20 ♗xb7, it could lead to something like an approximately level position.

16 ♖xd7 ♗xd7?

Following this third successive error it is now Black who is lost.

There were still chances to stay in the game with 16...♗xc3 when to keep the pawn structure intact with 17 ♘xc3 ♕f4+ 18 ♔b1 looks best and following 18...♖axd8 19 exd8♕ ♖xd8 20 ♖xd8+ ♔g7 21 ♖g1 ♕xf2 22 ♘e2 ♗f3 23 ♖d1 White will emerge with a two rooks versus queen position.

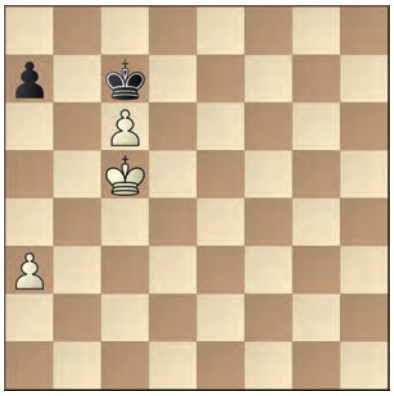
On 17 bxc3 ♕c5 there is the very quirky line 18 ♕xa8 ♖xa8 19 ♖d8+ ♔g7 20 ♖xa8 ♕xe7 21 ♖g1 b6 when White cannot comfortably retain his rook's services, and

after 22 ♖c8 ♗b7 23 ♖c4 (23 ♖b8 ♗f3 is irritating) 23...♗a6 we must reach another two rooks against queen ending: for example, 24 ♖d4 ♗xe2 25 ♔b2 ♕h4! 26 ♗xe2 ♕xf2 27 ♖gd1 ♕xe2 when, with the doubling of his c-pawns, I guess Black retains a few practical chances. But it's still bad.
17 ♕xd7 ♖ac8 18 ♗g2 ♕c5 19 ♗xb7! ♖b8 20 ♘d5

Now it's game over.
20...♕xf2 21 ♘ec3 ♗xc3 22 bxc3 ♔g7 23 g5 ♕c5 24 ♕a4??
Completely unrequired and tossing away the trivial win to be had from 24 ♕c6 or 24 ♖e1.
He must have been stuck on the line of 24...♖xb7? 25 ♕xe8 with no way of countering 26 ♕f8+. Instead, I took the other unit:
24...♖xe7! Oops. Hope springs eternal.
25 ♘xe7 ♕xg5+??
25...♕e3+! never occurred to me, but after 26 ♔b2 ♖xb7+ 27 ♔a2 ♕xc3! 28 ♖b1 ♖xe7 only Black can be better.
26 ♔d1 ♖d8+
On 26...♖xb7 27 ♕d4+ f6 28 ♖e1 ♖b1+ 29 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 30 ♕f2 ♕e4+ 31 ♔d2 White wins.
27 ♘d5 ♖xd5+ 28 ♗xd5 ♕xd5+ 29 ♔c1??
Incredibly, neither of us donkeys could spot 29 ♕d4+.
29...♕xh1+

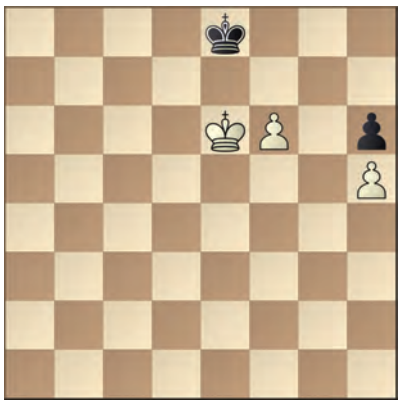
And, through plenty of thud and blunder, we ended up here.
"Can't be worse," I reasoned and so shoved my pawns to g5 and f4 as he advanced his to c5. And after about a dozen more moves, during which his king reached d2 and mine f7 and he offered me a couple of draws, I then offered him one – which he spurned.
With now about 10 seconds on my clock to some 20 or so on his, and seeing no obvious way for anybody to make legitimate progress and also unsure whether a draw would have sufficed for me to win the event on Bucholz and thereby bag an extra hundred Euro (it would have), I took us into the pawn ending:

1...♕e3+ 2 ♕xe3 fxe3+ 3 ♔xe3 ♔e6 4 ♔e4 h5 5 c6 ♔d6 6 ♔f5 g4 7 hxg4 hxg4 8 ♔xg4 ♔xc6 With the pawn on a2 Black would be lost, but with it at a3 a reserve tempo has been squandered and so the ending is actually now drawn.
9 ♔f4 ♔c5
Going after the a-pawn with 9...♔b5 would not suffice after 10 ♔e3 ♔a4 11 c4.
10 ♔e3
And he began to push me back.
10...♔c4 11 ♔d2 ♔d4 12 c3+ ♔c4 13 ♔c2 ♔c5 14 ♔d3 ♔d5 15 c4+ ♔c5 16 ♔c3 ♔c6 17 ♔d4 ♔d6 18 c5+ ♔c6 19 ♔c4 ♔c7 20 ♔d5 ♔d7 21 c6+ ♔c7 22 ♔c5



I knew about the celebrated triangulation manoeuvre by which White may win when the black pawn is at a6 and hence had conscientiously avoided any pawn move. Here after perhaps five or six seconds thought, I selected **22...♔c8??** which lost to **23 ♔d6 ♔d8 24 a4! ♔c8 25 a5! ♔d8 26 c7+ ♔c8 27 ♔c6** and I had to resign. Instead, 22...♔d8! or 22...♔b8! would have held.

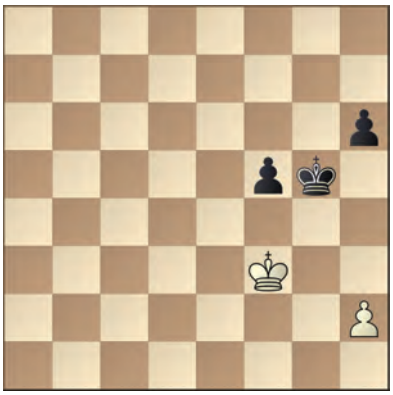
The funny thing was that I had spent quite some time studying this pawn ending of rook and bishop pawn versus rook pawn and thought I was the business at it. Not only was I, as mentioned, aware, having first seen it in a book by David Hooper, of the triangulation in positions such as this:



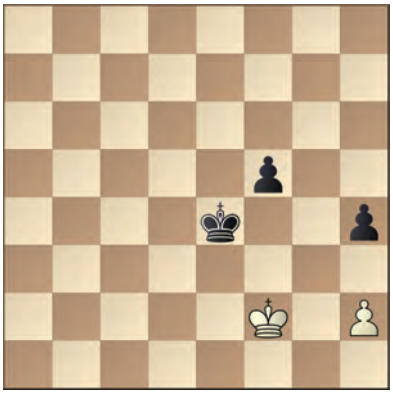
The win is **1 ♔e5 ♔f8 2 ♔f4 ♔e8 3 ♔e4 ♔f8 4 ♔e5**, etc.

I had also studied, from *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, this famous ending.

R.Vaganian–J.Sunye Neto
Rio Interzonal 1979



The defence of this position demands the use of coordinate squares, and, if it is not defended with precision, the winning method is not easily sussed. Vaganian, who for several years would occupy the number three spot on the world rating list, did not know of it.
Rafael's decisive error, a spectating Dvoretsky noted, was with **61 ♔g3?**, which lost after:
61...h5 62 ♔f3 h4! 63 ♔g2 ♔g4! 64 ♔f2 ♔f4
This position is reciprocal zugzwang. With Black to play there is no win.
65 ♔e2 ♔e4 66 ♔f2



Now comes the beautiful trick **66...♔d3!! 67 ♔f3 h3!!** and Vaganian resigned as 68 ♔f4 ♔e2 69 ♔xf5 ♔f3! shoulder barges and leads to the pawn's promotion.

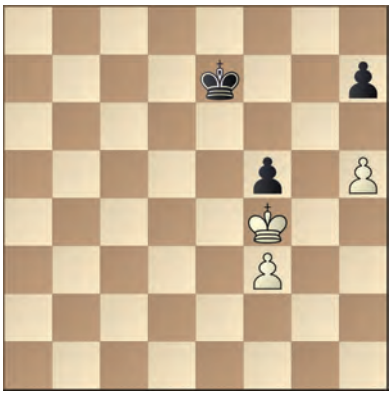
Instead, 61 ♔e2! would have sufficed, viz. 61...♔g4 62 ♔e3 h5 (or 62...♔h3 64 ♔f4 ♔xh2 65 ♔xf5 and the h-pawn falls too) 63 ♔f2 ♔f4 64 ♔e2 ♔e4 65 ♔f2 h4 66 ♔e2 and White will meet 66...♔f4 with 67 ♔f2 when it would be Black's turn to move. Alternatively, if 61...h5 62 ♔e3 (62 ♔f1 also draws) 62...♔g4 63 ♔f2 ♔f4 64 ♔e2 ♔e4 65 ♔f2 h4 66 ♔e2 and, once again, it's Black's move which enables white to draw.

Sunye's second was Pal Benko who had independently reached the conclusion that 61 ♔e2! drew. Seirawan once told me, "You don't trade queens against Benko. Even when it's forced, even when it's the *only* move, you *don't* trade queens against Benko!"

Benko, a Candidate in 1962, once commented that he would prefer that the ending came first in chess. He was still alive when I first penned this article and probably even better technically than was Dvoretsky.

This abstruse technique was also overlooked that very same year by a chap who would later be hired by Kasparov as a second.

Z.Azmaiparashvili-L.Eolian
USSR Spartakiad 1979



Azmai missed several opportunities to make it happen with the first arising here: 59 ♔xf5! ♔f7 60 f4 ♔e7 61 ♔e5 ♔f7 62 ♔d6!! ♔f6 63 h6!!, etc, would have done the trick for him, just as it did for Sunye.

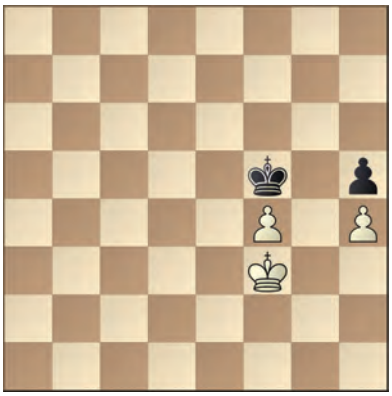
And that example I was also(!) familiar with.

Valles in 1949 composed a study featuring this clever win, although it has been, incorrectly, attributed to Maizelis' discovery in 1955. And Yermolinsky is of the opinion that it was known in the 1800s even.

In such an ending as arose in my game with Giaccio, if the superior side's rook's pawn has advanced by even one square then the win by normal means is not there. However, in my pride at my smart-arse familiarisation with Hooper's triangulation manoeuvre, the recondite win executed by Sunye and the accurate and subtle way of drawing by reciprocal zugzwang hit upon by Dvoretsky and Benko, I am afraid that I just had not let that initial simple truth register.

Ah, well. I only had a few seconds left (that's the best for an excuse I may manage), but at least I knew the Laws on castling better than Beliavsky, Karpov and Korchnoi.

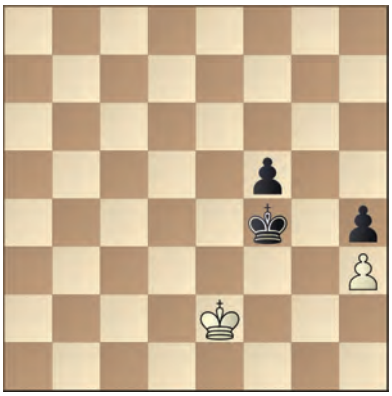
Re further insights into this ending, back in 1976 I copied out from Maizelis' *Pawn Endings* this position:



It's trivial and well known: **1 ♔e3 ♔g4 2 ♔e4 ♔xh4 3 ♔f3** and wins. But when a few years ago I gave it as an example to a pupil of mine, an American lady called Madge Smith whose ICC rating is below 1400, she suggested 3 f5 instead. And to my amazement I saw that this too is winning: for example, 3...♔g5 4 ♔e5 h4 5 f6 h3 6 f7 h2 7 f8♕ h1♕ 9 ♕g8+ and 10 ♕h8+ wins the queen.

You're never too old to learn!

Lastly, when this position arose in a game between future Candidate Yudasin and International Master Osnos in Leningrad 1987...



...something noteworthy happened. Yudasin told his opponent the position was a well-known draw and proposed one. Osnos was shocked at his own ignorance, believed the con and accepted there and then.

You will know by now how the triangulation wins for Black by his deliberately losing a move: **1...♔e4 2 ♔f2 f4 3 ♔e2 f3+ 4 ♔f1** and now **4...♔e5 5 ♔e1 ♔f5 6 ♔f1 ♔e4**, with a decisive penetration.

It just goes to show: don't believe everybody, because they might just be playing silly buggers with you.

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in August

1	=	Reti Opening	*148 games*
2	⇧	Queen's Gambit Declined	*131 games*
3	⇧	Caro-Kann Defence	*126 games*
4	⇩	King's Indian Defence	*124 games*
5	⇩	1 d4 ♘f6 sidelines	*110 games*
6	=	Nimzo-Indian Defence	*107 games*
7	⇧	Slav Defence	*105 games*
8	⇩	Sicilian Najdorf	*86 games*
9	=	English, 1...e5	*80 games*
10	⇧	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 sidelines	*79 games*
11	⇧	Grünfeld Def, Classical	*68 games*
12	⇩	Sicilian, 2 ♘f3 d6 sidelines	*65 games*
13	⇧	English, 1...c5	*61 games*
14	⇧	1 d4 d5 sidelines	*60 games*
15	⇩	English, 1...♘f6	*54 games*
16	⇩	Queen's Indian Defence	*53 games*
17	⇩	English, 1...e6	*50 games*
18	⇧	Giuoco Piano	*50 games*
19	⇧	Sicilian Kan	*48 games*
20	⇩	Ruy Lopez, Berlin Def.	*43 games*

2,746 games played between 1-31 August where both players were rated over 2400 Elo

Source: TWIC.
Compiled by *HIARCS 14*.

In association with
HIARCS Chess Explorer - hiarcs.com
and *The Week in Chess* --
theweekinchess.com

To Hull and Back

Sean Marsh was impressed by his visit to the English Women's Championship

It is 8.40 p.m. on a Sunday evening and WGM Katarzyna Toma has just played her 154th move on board two against WFM Sarah Longson. The game, which has hung in the balance for more hours than anyone left standing can even hope to remember, is about to boil down to king and pawn against king, with an unstoppable and decisive promotion to follow. Sarah resigns – and Katarzyna has managed to catch up with Louise Head, who earlier on defeated Rayelynn Posadas in another very tough game on board one, to share the English Women's title.

Sarah and Rayelynn certainly played their part in the magnificent final round, but on this occasion both Louise and Katarzyna had that little bit extra to carry them over the line. It was an extraordinary end to a magnificent festival of chess that will surely be remembered for many years to come. Let me take you back to how it all started...

The English Women's Chess Championship took place in Hull this year and the event attracted 34 entries, including several titled players. The oldest competitor was 72; the youngest, just 8. The Royal Hotel, which offered all of the rooms and facilities we could ever need, proved to be a worthy venue – especially as it was just one door away from the railway station, making it an easy target for travelling players and officials.

Hull is currently in the midst of a chess revolution, thanks to the hard work of some highly dedicated individuals, of whom Stephen Greep is undoubtedly the prime mover. 2018 brought the British Chess Championships to the banks of the Humber and the junior scene has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of the highly popular Summer Schools of Chess. I also delivered a CSC Training Day at the start of the year, which was well-received and ignited significant interest in various quarters.

The festival events started with coaching sessions for local juniors, by WGM and IM Jovanka Houska, who stayed on to give an excellent informal talk at the quirky Brain Jar café. The food and drink – topped off with a mint hot chocolate that simply had to be tasted to be believed – led to an extended social session complete with casual games of chess, utilising the boards and sets which inhabit the café on a permanent basis, alongside a very impressive chess library – all thanks to Stephen's community efforts. It was almost impossible to stop local chess

All smiles at the start of what would turn out to be a gruelling final round. On the furthest board, Louise Head (left) would outplay surprise package Rayelynn Posadas, but after some 154 moves she would be caught by Katarzyna Toma (right) who overcame Sarah Longson.

favourite Jo Hutchinson setting up the pieces and repeatedly starting new games, but between the moves we had a fascinating discussion, with strong emphasis placed on chess for girls and women.

Unfortunately, Jovanka had to catch a train immediately after we returned from the Brain Jar, but her presence had given the festival the high profile and inspirational start it deserved – and there was still plenty more to come. I delivered two talks to everyone who was not involved in the games on the Friday evening. I had planned on doing one, but did the second by request. There was still time to see the end of some of the games and it was already clear we were in for an exciting tournament.

There were so many extra touches throughout the weekend, from the Saturday night barbecue to the extraordinary cakes, depicting scenes from games featuring Katarzyna and Jovanka from the British. The first cake would have left people baffled, as a key piece had been left off the winning position, but Jovanka's was correct.

Elsewhere, there was a simultaneous display by our Editor, who lost just one game, to Richard Atkinson, and drew one with Stephen Greep; a room for junior coaching, led by Peter Cloudsdale and Michael Pollard; and an analysis room which was open to all players who wanted to study their games in the company of Richard, Tim Wall, Chris Fegan and myself. We had a steady stream of players coming along throughout the weekend and there was a very noticeable desire from all of the players to increase their chess under-standing. Tim even set up a live commentary room on the final day of the event.

Meanwhile, back in the tournament hall, the players were still battling it out and the games were growing in intensity. Louise Head and Katarzyna Toma, who drew a tough game in the fourth round, shared the lead as they went into the fifth and final session. Defending co-champion Kanwal Bhatia had been pushed out of the running by a whirlwind of an attack in the penultimate round. There were plenty of fine games over the course of the weekend and this attacking gem was one of the very best.

R.Posadas-K.Bhatia
Round 4
Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘xd4

♗c5 5 ♗e3 ♕f6 6 c3 d6 7 ♗c4 ♘ge7 8 0-0 ♘e5 9 ♗e2 ♕g6 10 ♔h1 0-0 11 ♘d2 ♗b6

All still theory. Black had lots of options, including the more popular 11...♘g4, trying to hunt down one of the bishops.

12 ♗h5 ♕f6

The black queen is quite used to travelling around in the Scotch Game and her great experience means she rarely ends up in trouble.

13 f4 ♘5c6 14 ♘c4 ♗xd4 15 ♗xd4

This looks more aggressive than 15 cxd4, but is probably not quite as good.

15...♘xd4

15...♕f5, hitting both c4 and e4, would have given Black more of an opportunity to force through ...d6-d5.

16 cxd4 b6

16...d5!, traditionally the equalising break for Black, would still have been worth a thought.

17 e5 dxe5 18 fxe5 ♕e6 19 ♘e3 ♗a6 20 ♖f4

Rayelynn loves to attack, especially if she can sacrifice something along the way. This move aims at maximum mobility although there was a case for the slightly more positional 20 ♗g4 ♕g6 21 ♖f2, hoping to utilise f5.

20...♕h6?

Quite natural at first glance, but overlooking a tactical shot. 20...c5!? is a better try, hoping to catch White before the pieces find better coordination and detonating the centre along the way.

21 ♗xf7+! ♔h8

21...♖xf7 22 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 runs into 23 ♕f3+ and 24 ♕xa8, with a winning advantage for White. However, White's attack quickly gathers phenomenal pace after the move played and I don't think Rayelynn's play can be improved from this point onwards.

22 ♕f3 ♘g6 23 ♖f5 ♘h4?

It is unlikely anything else would have saved the game, but this faulty fork simply loses time – which is the last thing Black wants to do.

24 ♕g3 ♘g6

The problem is 24...♘xf5 25 ♘xf5 and the black queen cannot save herself without allowing 26 ♕xg7 checkmate.

25 e6 ♘e7 26 ♖h5 ♕f6 27 ♘g4 ♕xd4

Find the checkmate!

28 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 29 ♕h4# 1-0

Once Louise had beaten Rayelynn, it left Katarzyna needing a victory to share the title, but her game against Sarah took an extraordinary amount of twists and turns. Sarah – who deserves great credit for her efforts – certainly had her chances, but the position was always extremely difficult to navigate. Here are the closing moments of this classic encounter.

S.Longson-K.Toma
Round 5

Both players had been 'living on increment' for some considerable time. Lesser combative players would surely have exhaustedly called it a draw at various points of the game, but both players seemed determined to squeeze every last bit of play from the position. This is the last saveable moment of the game, from Sarah's point of view.

144 ♖h5?

Checks are natural when short of time, but 144 ♔d2 at once is an improvement here. A sample line runs 144...♗f2 145 ♖e7+ ♔d4 146 ♖xe2 ♘xe2 147 ♔xe2 and White just needs to move the king around – and leave the bishop exactly where it is – to secure the draw. The problem is that after...

144...♔f4 145 ♔d2 ♗f2 ...the rook cannot force the knight off the board and it is now too close to the king to keep the distracting checks going. **146 ♖h1 e1♕+ 147 ♖xe1 ♗xe1+ 148 ♔xe1 ♔e3**

Now the situation is quite different from the opposite-coloured bishop scenario mentioned above. A knight sacrifice for the a-pawn is definitely in the air and, as if by magic, the black king cannot be kept out of the key square, d3.

149 ♗f7 ♔d3 150 ♗g6+ ♔d4 151 ♗f7 ♘xa2! 152 ♗xa2 ♔c3 153 ♔d1 ♔b2 154 ♗e6 a2 0-1

And this is where we came in, with the position about to be reduced to king and pawn against king.

Congratulations to the new champions. Louise held the title in 2017, but Katarzyna was making her debut in the tournament and, as she will be representing England from now on, it is very clear she will be able to make a huge impact on our game.

It takes a lot of time, money and effort to create such a wonderful festival of chess. Stephen Greep and Chris Fegan, the ECF Director of Women's Chess, were undoubtedly the key personnel and they were helped by considerable financial support from Hull City Council, Hull and District Chess Association, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust and the ECF, as well as Women's Enterprise in the Humber and Turpin Bookkeeping Services of Hull, who jointly supplied three very nice trophies for the best juniors. Chess and Bridge supported the event too; there was a complimentary copy of the August 2019 *CHESS* for all participants, which was a particularly important one for women's chess.

I would like to see Hull become the permanent venue for the championship, but that will be partly down to the determination and energy levels of those involved this time around and also to the availability of significant funds for next year and beyond. Meanwhile, congratulations to everyone who played their part (organisers, arbiters, coaches and, of course, the 34 players – whether they became champions or not) in making this event such a successful and thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

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Find the Winning Moves

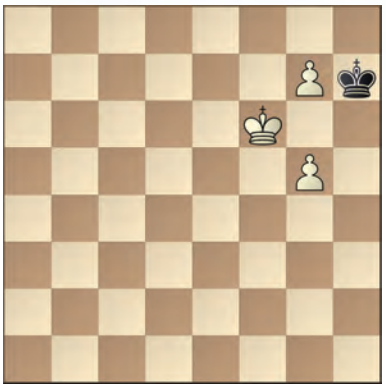
24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from many recent events, not least the Grand Chess Tour and the British Championships. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 53.

Warm-up Puzzles

(1) P.Leko-S.Bogner
Biel 2019
White to Play

(2) C.McNab-A.McClement
Scottish Championship, Edinburgh 2019
White to Play



(3) U.Bajarani-N.Javanbakht
Turkish League 2019
White to Play

(4) F.Caruana-H.Nakamura
Paris (blitz) 2019
White to Play

(5) T.Rushbrooke-M.Ifalore
Major Open, Torquay 2019
Black to Play

(6) V.Anand-D.Dubov
Paris (blitz) 2019
Black to Play

Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 53

(7) J.Menadue-J.Garnett
Major Open, Torquay 2019
White to Play

(8) K.Arakhamia-Grant-A.Green
Scottish Championship, Edinburgh 2019
White to Play

(9) B.Roselli Mailhe-F.Perez Ponsa
Sao Paulo 2019
Black to Play

(10) F.Caruana-A.Grischuk
Paris (rapid) 2019
Black to Play

(11) V.Kramnik-P.Svidler
Amsterdam (blitz) 2019
White to Play

(12) C.Gheorghiu-L.Mcgregor
Scottish Championship, Edinburgh 2019
White to Play

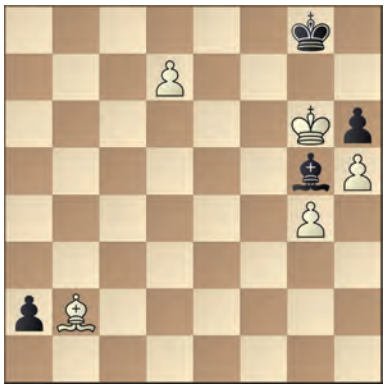
(13) S.Shankland-P.Maghsoodloo
Biel 2019
White to Play

(14) T.Hilton-W.Taylor
Major Open, Torquay 2019
Black to Play

(15) C.Ali Marandi-O.Ozer
Turkish League 2019
White to Play

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 53

(16) A.Huzman-I.Gorshtein
Netanya 2019
White to Play



(17) D.Dubov-V.Anand
Paris (blitz) 2019
White to Play

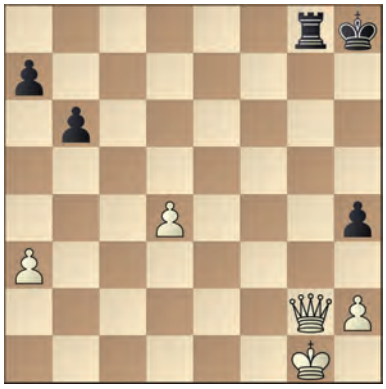
(18) D.Svetushkin-D.Gorodetzky
Netanya 2019
White to Play

(19) P.Svidler-A.Grischuk
Amsterdam (rapid) 2019
Black to Play

(20) R.Rapport-L.Dominguez Perez
Saint Louis (rapid) 2019
Black to Play

(21) C.Murphy-C.O'Donnell
Irish Championship, Dublin 2019
Black to Play

(22) A.He-V.Mikhalevski
Seattle 2019
Black to Play



(23) M.Radovanovic-Wei Yi
Changsha 2019
Black to Play

(24) F.Svane-K.Berg
Aarhus 2019
White to Play

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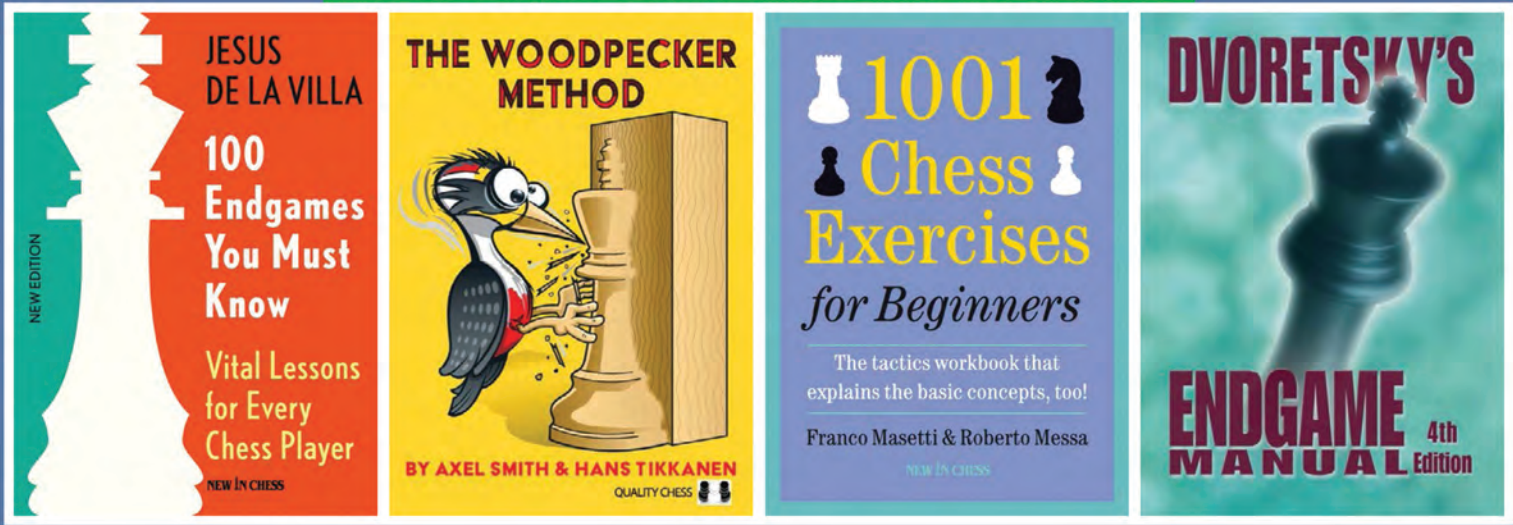

Pal Benko

1928 - 2019

The inventor of the Benko Gambit, a two-time candidate for the world title, author, and composer of endgame studies and chess problems has passed away, aged 91

Pal Benko was a true polymath of the game. A grandmaster who was amongst the world's elite for the best part of two decades, a reluctant opening theoretician who literally made the Volga Gambit his own, and a composer of studies and problems that saw him awarded the title of International Master of Chess Composition.

Born on July 14th 1928 in Amiens, France, where his parents were holidaying at the time, Pal was introduced to chess by his father at the age of 10. Largely self-taught, he honed his skills by taking on all-comers in the parks of his hometown and studying the games of Capablanca from a book he owned. Showing a clear aptitude for the game he was soon winning local tournaments where prizes of bacon and flour were much appreciated during the hardships of the war years.

It was only at the conclusion of the war that he was free to compete at the highest levels, but this lack of competition during his formative years does not seem to have had too much of an impact on his progress as by the age of 20 he had won the Hungarian championship. Interestingly, this was the one and only time he was able to win his home country's championship.

Though Benko had qualified for the 1952 Interzonal tournament held in Stockholm, he was unable to compete having been sent to a concentration camp in Budapest for a failed attempt to defect to the USA while playing in a tournament in Berlin earlier in the year. There he languished for 16 months, and with no outside contact allowed - friends and family were under the impression his defection to America had been successful. His release, following the death of Stalin, saw Benko kept on a tight leash with participation in international tournaments initially denied and, eventually, only under the closest of supervision.

After successful trips to Moscow for the 1956 Olympiad (where Hungary came third), and Ireland for the Dublin Zonal tournament of 1957, Benko made a second attempt to defect after the 1957 World Student Team Championship in Reykjavik (where he scored 7½/12 on board one), which this time was successful.

Pal Benko at the super strong 1964 Amsterdam Interzonal, where he could only score 9/23.

"Everything had a wonderful glow to it, the food tasted like nectar and women seemed so beautiful that I had to date as many as possible."

Initially life in the U.S. was not easy for Benko, having arrived in a country in which he couldn't speak the language and with only a few dollars to his name. At the time, the United States Chess Federation was not in a position to support its professional players. Having studied economics at university in Hungary, Benko initially worked at the New York Stock Exchange. After qualifying for the 1959 Candidates' Tournament, via the Portoroz Interzonal for which performance FIDE had awarded him the grandmaster title, he decided to turn professional. He was the second U.S. chess professional behind the the then 16-year old Bobby Fischer.

Benko won eight U.S. Open titles, exceeding Reube Fine's seven, a record which still stands to this day. The U.S. Championship unfortunately eluded him, with Fischer dominating during most of Benko's prime. His closest attempt was second place behind Walter Browne in 1974 - the first of Walter's eventual six titles.

Benko would also play a pivotal role in Bobby Fischer's road to the World Championship title. In 1969 Benko had finished third in the U.S. Championship and thus qualified for the Interzonal tournament (alongside Reshevksy and Addison). Fischer had not played in the US Championship and was therefore out of the cycle. Benko agreed to give up his spot in the Interzonal in order to give Fischer another shot at the World Championship, and the rest, as they say, is history...

Pal Benko, pictured here in 2005, standing next to the opening that bears his name.

"My own chess career was nearing its end, while Fischer was very young, very strong and very ambitious. And I knew that he would do well and earn the right to compete for the world title."

Pal Benko will be forever be remembered for the opening which bears his name, the Benko Gambit (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5), which he popularised and played with great success from the mid-1960s, before publishing *The Benko Gambit* in 1974. His other major contribution to opening theory was the Benko Opening (1 g3), which he used in 11 of his 14 games as White at the 1962 Candidates Tournament, defeating Bobby Fischer and Mikhail Tal along the way. However, to think of Benko as a pioneer of opening theory would be a mistake; his opening ideas were designed in order to avoid detailed study of the openings and as a surprise weapon against his opponents.

"I remember being with a girlfriend who asked me to look over some chess openings with her. I instantly fell asleep. I found that I could always take a nap in any situation by just looking at some opening variation – my eyes would shut right away."

Benko's real love was reserved for the endgame. He produced a monthly endgame column for *Chess Life* magazine for over 40 years and was responsible for revising the Reuben Fine classic *Basic Chess Endings* in 2003.

"Endgames, though, fascinated me. I wanted to dig deep for the ultimate truth, but truth doesn't exist in the beginning phase of a game."

After he retired from playing, Benko focused his attentions on chess composition. He composed multiple chess problems and studies, and in 1995 was awarded the title of International Master in Composition. He continued to compose and publish problems into his 90th year. His speciality was composing problems for friends based on their initials. For Max Euwe's birthday he composed two mate in three problems in the shape of an 'M' and an 'E' which were iced on to cakes for a party. The 'M' was solved by Euwe in quick fashion, but he was baffled by the 'E' and in the end Benko had to whisper a hint as the guests were hungry and the cakes need to be cut.

Benko also acted as coach and trainer to the Polgar sisters and Peter Leko in the early stages of their career. At the time of his death, Pal Benko was the second oldest grandmaster alive (behind Yuri Averbakh). He is survived by his wife Gizella, daughter Palma, and son David.

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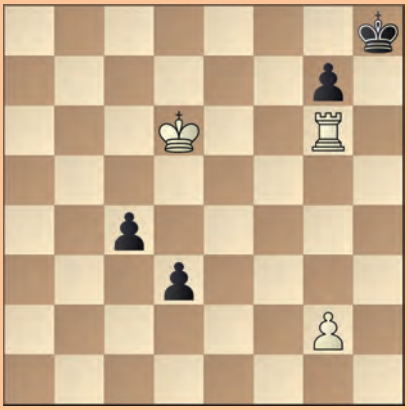
Benko's Bafflers

Composed by the man himself when he was just 15. Only five pieces, four on their original squares, and the task is *White to play and mate in three*. Be warned, when Pal showed it to Bobby Fischer during the 1968 Lugano Olympiad Bobby bet Pal that he would solve it in less than half an hour — and lost the bet.

'E' is for Euwe. It's *White to play and mate in three*. Can you have your cake and eat it too? The fifth world champion struggled with this one so don't beat yourself up if you struggle...

And to round things off, here is a beautiful but slightly easier study from Pal Benko, with *White to play and win.*



Full answers will be published on the Solutions page of our November issue.

“It Starts with Hello”

Ben Graff explores the power of the 64 squares to bring people together beyond the competitive arena - chess can help the young, the old and pretty much everyone

I stood at the water’s edge on my last night in Torquay, reflecting on a good week amongst friends. The British is always a special time of year. But this was not the reason why the power of chess to bring people together felt more real to me than ever. In recent weeks, I had been talking to pioneers who harness chess not primarily as a competitive tool, but rather as a means of combating social isolation and loneliness. Others who use chess to teach children life skills and are taking the game to kids in poorer parts of the world. Heroes who utilise chess as a means of keeping the elderly connected, empowering the sick and helping those in our prisons. I wanted to tell their stories and share the inspiration that comes from the many different ways in which the game we love is making a difference to so many lives.

Occasionally, something happens to make you reconsider the world you thought you knew. This was how it felt to me after my article on the New York chess scene, when Ross Smith dropped me a line. In truth, I have always seen chess as a competitive game. I relish the sense of gladiatorial combat, the heat of the battle. Ross opened my eyes to the fact that chess could be so much more than this. He had noticed that I referred to chess as a common language and wanted to share the work his organisation FiveasideCHESS is doing to help combat social isolation, loneliness and mental health issues in our increasingly digital age.

The statistics are frightening. Over nine million people in the UK, almost a fifth of the population, say they are always or often lonely, but almost two-thirds feel uncomfortable admitting it. At any one time, a sixth of the population in England have a mental health problem and these numbers are rising. Whether it is down to economic uncertainty, social media or rising expectations as to what life should be like, is hard to say. What is clear is that these are real issues that impact on all of us one way or another.

Ross Smith tells me that his mission is to “Reconnect people in a disconnected world”. FiveasideCHESS is a simpler form of the game and their chess sets are used as icebreakers to get people back into the ‘Art of Conversation’. “We always tell people that the first move in any game is to say hello,” Ross says. His team have worked hard to place FiveasideCHESS sets up and down the country in the sorts of places where people might meet such as supermarkets, cafes and libraries. The only condition being that the set needs to be visible and accessible to anyone to use.

Ross’s team has organised a ‘Battling Suicide’ Bus tour, to take FiveasideCHESS and use the game as a tool to prevent future suicides by giving people a safe space in which to talk and the opportunity to use chess as a way of connecting. Campaigns have also been run to support long distance lorry drivers, another group who are often isolated and in need of support.

Perhaps it is not surprising, when you think about it, that something as intimate as a game of chess is a great way of bringing people together. That it does not take much by way of imagination to use the game as an icebreaker, a means to get people talking. That in a world increasingly dominated by screens, something as solid and ancient as a chess board has an important role to play in helping people form meaningful connections.

Ross tells me that for all of FiveasideCHESS’s good work, there is still more to be done. They are actively looking for area advocates who would be prepared to use the FiveasideCHESS sets “To change their world in a village”. So if anyone reading this thinks they might be able to help, there is an opportunity to get involved. Perhaps all of us might equally think beyond FiveasideCHESS to the ways in which our chess clubs play an important part in our communities and whether there is more we can do to welcome people in.

We often look on those who coach our

Have you seen Ross Smith’s bus around Britain as it aims to prevent suicides by introducing people to FiveasideCHESS, as seen on the left?

8-year-old Olivia attends Coventry Chess Academy and at the recent British Championships was paired against an opponent some 82 years her senior. Chess really is a game for all ages!

juniors primarily as developers of the next generation of chess talent. Paul Lam, the Director of the Coventry Chess Academy (CCA), and Evan Rabin, the Director of Premier Chess in New York, are undoubtedly both helping to bring on a string of talented youngsters. However, both are quick to highlight other ways in which chess helps to develop their students.

Paul tells me that the social benefits of chess for children are often underappreciated. "The CCA has a large and incredibly diverse membership spanning the full range of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, but also personalities. The result is an enriching environment in which children can form friendships, grow in confidence and have great fun while feeling comfortable enough to express themselves to the maximum. It's wonderful to see children who barely say a word in the first few weeks come out of their shell to the extent that they can't stop talking! What I will say is, as a coach, I really do feel a big part of my job is helping others to think for themselves, respecting their autonomy and enabling self-empowerment."

Paul tells me that the Academy is designed to help children fulfil their full potential in and outside the classroom. Taking responsibility for your own actions, control of your own learning, thinking ahead, making difficult decisions, problem solving, resilience under pressure and creativity are all skills Paul lists as amongst those he seeks to instil in his students that are applicable both at and away from the board. The associated confidence and self-worth that chess can give people more generally is also a benefit to his students.

Paul also gave me a perfect illustration of the way in which chess can bridge the generations. "Chess is a game that transcends age. At the British Chess Championships, one of our members, Olivia, aged 8, played a 90-year-old gentleman. The result was a fighting draw after hours of play!"

Evan Rabin has long been coaching children in America, but he is determined to share the benefits of chess much more widely and has just returned from teaching children at Uru Secondary School in Tanzania. It was his second trip to the region and a venture he embarked on with Theresa Grant, the founder of Make a Difference Now, an organisation that sponsors 31 orphaned children in Tanzania and overseas. Evan said, "By playing chess, not only do you improve critical thinking skills, but you can also build a long-lasting community."

Evan is always struck by the ability of chess to unite people from very different cultures and backgrounds. "While my opponents didn't always speak English, they always knew the language of chess." He found that his students learnt quickly, and by the end of the week were studying Paul Morphy's famous Opera Game and ladder mates with ease, and a 63-person tournament on the final day was huge fun.

Evan gave his students far more than a good week of chess, judging by the testimonies. A lifetime of memories, a new way of looking at the world, and the ability for those his program had reached to in turn bring chess to others were all amongst the benefits. Peter said, "Chess has moved me infinitely. My enemy in chess, I really love it. This year I am definitely improved. It makes me think deeply." Christian wrote, "Chess improves how to think and gives us more knowledge. The best thing I learned was how to win." Gaurent added, "The program was good. It will help students cooperate well and experience completion in other studies. We are going to create a chess club, have competitions and ask other schools to try and learn about it as we are the ambassadors."

Jon Lloyd has worked with children via Chess in Schools and is now actively taking chess to the elderly under the same umbrella, running community chess clubs free of charge in Bracknell, Brighton and Bath. The aim of the programs is to reduce loneliness amongst older people, and to give participants the opportunity to enhance thinking skills in a social setting. The statistics highlight the challenge. Silverline, a UK Charity dedicated to supporting lonely older people, have received 920,000 calls since 2012 and over half of callers have said they have no one else to talk to. It is thanks to Jon and people like him, that chess is again playing a role in helping to combat this.

Jon is quick to praise our own Executive Editor Malcolm Pein for all his support and encouragement in getting this work off the ground and helping to secure funding. Moreover, for all the effort that has gone into ensuring that chess is now socially subscribed on the NHS, with Health Secretary Matt Hancock having described it as a "common sense solution", in the fight against dementia.

Leading New York chess coach Evan Rabin (second left) has twice visited Tanzania to promote the game. Not all his students there spoke English, but they all knew the language of chess.

Evan Rabin's efforts remind us that chess helps children grow at and away from the board.

We will all have our own views on other aspects of Government policy, but this is one we can surely all agree with.

Jon explained that for many elderly people, the traditional club environment is not really what they are looking for. The fact that clubs meet late in the day is often not practicable. There are many who want to have fun with a game without necessarily taking it as seriously as club players do. People are often actively looking for more of a social dynamic. In practice Jon finds that very often the men who come to his session played when they were children and are relearning. Many of the women have not played before. Jon tells me that they start by learning how the pieces move, via simpler forms of chess. "Everyone plays a game from the very first session."

Jon says that many people start out thinking that chess is impossibly complex and get a real sense of pride when they realise they can play. Jon also illustrates that chess can be a very good way of gently building relationships. "I often see people start out playing quietly, but somehow just doing this builds trust, and over a few sessions people start to talk to each other and friendships blossom."

Jon has also been working with cancer patients via a Macmillan course in 2018. One lady said, "Going through cancer treatment robs you of many things; the worst being unable to escape the mental turmoil. For me the discipline of playing chess excludes unwanted thoughts and gives me a much needed respite." Further Macmillan courses are planned for the future.

Carl Portman, the author of the seminal book *Chess Behind Bars* and ECF Manager of Prisons Chess, as well as a regular columnist in these pages, was somebody else whose work I wanted to explore further for this piece. I began by asking him why he had decided to get involved with chess in prisons. He told me it was: "Because I wanted to give something of our magical game of chess back to society, and the prison community is easily ignored or forgotten. I thought, 'If not me, then who?' Bringing some sort of hope and purpose through chess in an often hopeless place is worthy of such endeavour."

I could see parallels between Carl's thinking and Ross Smith's, in terms of a common desire to transcend boundaries and bring the game to people who society might otherwise try and brush under the carpet. I asked Carl what benefits he thought chess could bring to prisoners.

"The benefits are many. Above all, it brings people together in a way that nothing else seems to. When I hold a chess event prisoners from all wings and groups come together without trouble. Before and after the event they may be enemies, but during it they work collectively to ask questions and to play me at chess. It is wonderful to see – and often astonishes the prison staff..

"The sheer focus on the board means that the rest of the world is shut off for that game. Everyone's troubles dissolve for that time. It is also a productive use of time. When prisoners are battling on a chess board, they are not fighting each other or the staff – at cost to the taxpayer! Testimony from prisoners includes the fact that it helps them think more clearly and in one case even saved a life – chess persuaded an individual that hanging himself in his cell was not preferable to yet another exciting game of chess."

I asked Carl what his hopes for the future were, and he said: "I want chess to be on the agenda at every prison. I want all prisoners to have access to the game. I want governors, staff and ministers to see and appreciate the benefits that chess can have in their prisons. It is good for prisons, it is good for society and if it is good for society, we should all consider supporting it."

That is something we should all agree with. I also was delighted to discover through Malcolm Pein that Chess in Schools and Communities are now active too in prisons, running weekly chess clubs in six institutions.

Competitive chess is thrilling. It will always be a big part of my life. Being in Torquay for this year's British was another fantastic experience. Yet Ross, Paul, Evan, Jon and Carl all showed me that our game has much more to offer than tournament play. All are heroes. All are using chess to improve the lives of others, in many cases working with groups in society that can often be forgotten.

There is scope to reach out to any of them if you want to get involved directly in their ventures. Alternatively, perhaps this article will inspire you to do something different, to find another way altogether to use chess as a positive force in your local community. To be more open to the many ways in which our game can reach people. To play your own part, as I am determined to play mine, in welcoming people in.

Jon Lloyd has built on the work of Chess in Schools and Communities to bring the game to those who are retired. Here we see him keeping a close eye on his students at Bracknell Library.

Chess on the Net

Danny Rosenbaum reveals how to get the most out of chess on YouTube and Twitch

Chess players these days are faced with a wealth of material to choose from, whether they want to improve their game or simply be entertained. Some of the obvious places to turn are books and DVDs, but this article is going to focus on the fast-growing areas of videos and streams.

It's sometimes difficult to see the wood for the trees and, with chess channels and content proliferating, any attempt to be up-to-date would always be doomed to fall a couple of tempi behind. Instead, therefore, of trying to provide a comprehensive map of the terrain, I have outlined a personal collection of some of the most useful, informative and entertaining resources.

At the latest count, I have subscribed to about 300 chess channels on YouTube – which is, at first glance, ridiculous. However, if I find a channel with merit, very often I will subscribe simply to support and provide encouragement to the person who has gone to the trouble of uploading the content. The benefits of subscribing to particular channels on YouTube are pretty limited. The main ones are making a channel that you are interested in easier to access, and the ability to have notifications of new content.

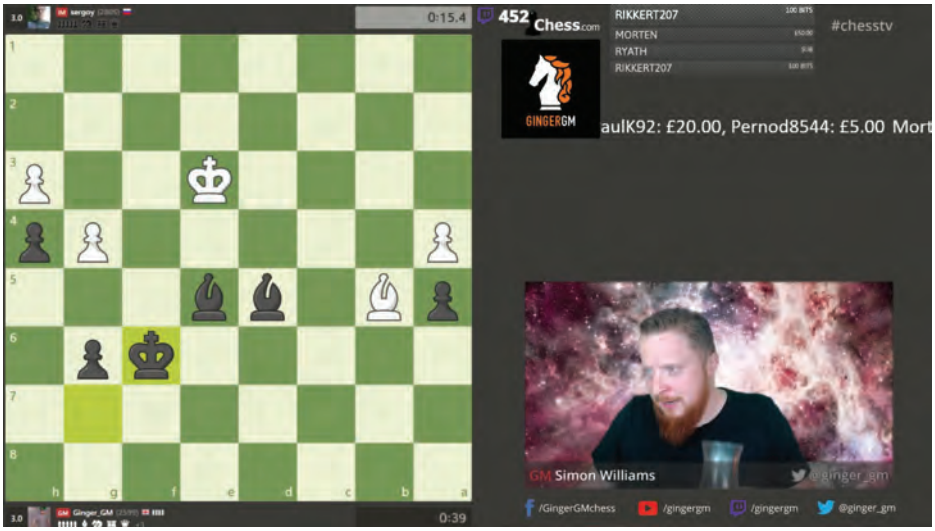
Subscribing on Twitch (twitch.tv) is another matter altogether. Each streamer has his or her rules. Benefits are at the discretion of the streamer and can include, for example, subscriber-only simuls and blitz games with the streamer, or sometimes subscribers can send in their games for analysis.

One big difference, of course, is that subscribing on YouTube is free, whereas on Twitch it involves a monthly fee (although you do get one free sub a month if you are with Amazon Prime). That said, simply 'following' on Twitch has the same benefits as 'subscribing' on YouTube.

A BIT OF FRIENDLY BANTER

There are many videos that are (forgive the pun) streams of consciousness, where we are treated to the inner thoughts of the streamer whilst he/she is playing a succession of games. Although known mainly for this type of content, many of the streams in this section also have a variety of high quality instructional videos.

A danger with watching strong players playing blitz and bullet games is that one can become very passive and spend hours watching without learning very much. When the player is bantering whilst playing there is very little time to think for oneself whilst spectating. Nevertheless, it is amazing how clearly some of these very strong players are capable of expressing their decision-making process whilst bashing out, or more accurately clicking out, the moves.



The Ginger GM, Simon Williams, has a big online following - on both Twitch and YouTube.

When the video is a short one, for example, featuring just one game, viewers might consider watching it first with the sound off, and thinking about the game for themselves as it progresses, before playing the video again with the sound on to compare their thoughts with those of the presenter. Another technique to enhance engagement and employ the little grey cells is to pause the videos at key moments and think for yourself what you would do before continuing with the video and seeing what actually happened.

Many of the channels which I mention are on both YouTube and Twitch. I have avoided peppering this article with lots of web addresses for each channel. You can easily reach them by simply searching for their name within YouTube or Twitch.

ChessNetwork

This is the channel of Jerry, an FM from Pennsylvania. He is a class act and, although not the strongest player to broadcast, he is one of the most entertaining and informative. As well as streaming his own games, he provides all manner of instructional videos like analyses of famous chess games, and how to solve puzzles. With around 1450 videos uploaded at the time of writing, there are hundreds of hours of excellent viewing available for all playing strengths.

If you ever find yourself playing against someone doing a live stream I recommend that, if you have the stream on in another browser tab, you switch the sound off so that you can concentrate and after the game play it back to hear the streamer's insights.

Some people dubbed 'stream snipers' deliberately listen to gain an unfair advantage, but sometimes this can backfire. An amusing instance of this is in ChessNetwork's 3-minute clip 'How to trick a stream sniper'.

John Bartholomew

One of his fascinating series of videos, available in a playlist on YouTube, is 'Climbing the Rating Ladder'. In each video John Bartholomew plays opponents within different grading bands. Here, he comments on the opponents' moves as well as his own and you can see clearly the different ways of thinking, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the different rating levels. Another very instructive series by this popular IM from Minnesota is 'Chess Fundamentals'.

GingerGM

GM Simon Williams's channel has plenty of entertaining and informative content. Some of the games he analyses are not the obvious

ones, for example, Healey-Eames and the extraordinary game Gareyev-Zulfic. His post-mortems of his own games at the 2019 British Championships are well worth watching.

Occasionally streamers will play against each other and each upload the video to their own channel. That way you can compare how the two sides looked at the game. In the instance of the Ginger GM playing Ben Finegold (his channel is GMBenjaminFinegold), this was spiced up with a little bit of trash talk.

GMHikaru

There is something mesmerising about watching Hikaru Nakamura's live stream. Whether he is playing Blitz or Bullet or moving at the speed of light on Chess.com's puzzle rush, or simply analysing Super GM games, he is eminently watchable. It is astonishing to see how quickly he thinks, and what's more, and unusually for a very strong player, he elucidates his thought process very clearly. Much of his chat is not on chess and that might bother some people, but to my mind it adds to the fun of the stream. Hikaru is one of the best at interacting with the audience and he offers very open candid opinions on all manner of subjects including his chess rivals.

Hikaru's is one of the streams where you might get more out of watching it live on Twitch, not just because of the adrenalin rush, but also because his use of background music means that some of the videos when played back have sections without audio.

Videochesstraining (YouTube), Sladgie (Twitch)

If Hikaru is Twenty-20 cricket then IM William Paschall is a five-day test match. He has a very laid-back style and the slower pace ensures that his is one of the most instructional streams available. It is also a good example of the benefits you can get by subscribing on Twitch.tv. For example, Paschall's subscribers can send their games in for him to analyse.

As I mentioned above, there are numerous quality channels and everyone will have their own favourites. There are so many more that I could mention. For example, Chessexplained and Kingscrusher make excellent viewing. However, this is not designed to be a comprehensive list, otherwise this article would have ended up rivalling Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*.

We might need to pause the stream to spot Black's plan, but Hikaru Nakamura sees it in a flash.

EDUCATION! EDUCATION! EDUCATION!

These channels are more focused on instruction and less on banter.

PowerPlayChess

GM Daniel King of *How Good is Your Chess?* fame provides match reports and analysis of top games. In each video, he tends to focus on one game, with the analysis usually lasting 15-20 minutes. Sometimes less is more and I find the length just right to keep my interest and concentration. If you're interested in particular players Daniel King has handily sorted the videos into playlists on YouTube arranged by player. Unsurprisingly, by far the greatest number of videos are devoted to games by Magnus Carlsen. His playlist has 320+ videos. There are also playlists sorted by event so anyone so minded can look back at, for example, the London Chess Classic of 2012 and see a video for each round.

Agadmator

Antonio Radic, better known as Agadmator, is a Croatian Candidate Master whose infectious enthusiasm helps to explain why he has amassed an incredible 460,000 subscribers. The number is growing fast. He recently gave up his job as a graphic designer to concentrate on making chess videos. Like GM Daniel King, Agadmator tends to focus on one game in each video. He features a wide variety of games including many historical ones.

Saint Louis Chess Club

There are hundreds of instructional videos available on the St. Louis Chess Club YouTube

Our own Daniel King's 'PowerPlay Chess' channel has racked up more than 17 million views since launching on YouTube back in 2012, in large part due to his clear delivery and excellent material.

YouTube

Don't just rely on other people's playlists, compile your own. For example, if you have an opening that interests you, seek out and compile videos on it that you can keep in a easy-to-find place, thereby using the playlist as a filing system.

Look at the content description and comments sections of videos for helpful timecodes. Some videos take a while to get to the point and a comment might highlight this by remarks with time codes such as "Game starts at 4.00" or "Watch the amazing queen sac at 32.06".

channel, catering for the whole gamut of abilities from beginner to advanced. They tend to be live recordings of lectures given to students at the club. Several GMs are featured, perhaps most prominently Ben Finegold. My own preference is for GM Varuzhan Akobian and GM Yasser Seirawan, who are both very clear and empathetic communicators. The latter together with WGM Jen Shahade and GM Maurice Ashley forms the core of St. Louis's live coverage team.

HIDDEN GEMS

The channels above have built up huge audiences partly because of very actively adding new content. This section covers a few lesser known channels. The first two seem to be dormant, but that takes nothing away from the content already sitting there waiting to be explored.

Majnu 2006

Majnu started posting videos on YouTube in 2006, but unfortunately stopped four years ago. He often analysed standard games in great depth. His style is very clear and there are lot of videos that club players would appreciate. An unusual and thought-provoking Majnu video was 'Chess: the great technique of anchoring', which provides some useful advice on the psychology of chess.

Peter Lalic

Unfortunately, there have been no new uploads for about five years, but Peter Lalic had a range of absorbing videos. Peter's style was unique and full of charisma. Examples of his most instructive content can be found in his playlist 'Chess Endgame Course', which has, appropriately, 64 excellent videos.

GM Matthew Sadler and Game Changer

These are two separate YouTube channels from Matthew Sadler. The latter is in conjunction with WIM Natasha Regan. Whether writing books or giving talks, GM Matthew Sadler is one of the best chess communicators out there and his videos maintain this high standard. There's not a huge number of videos in these channels, but all of them make for worthwhile viewing.

The St. Louis live coverage is always very slick, especially when they show the Grand Chess Tour.

SERVERS

Chess servers have come a long way in recent years. Whilst the ICC may be the Roscoe Tanner of servers, to my mind Chess.com, lichess, and Chess24 are Federer, Nadal and Djokovic, although don't ask me which is which!

One point of this admittedly flawed analogy is that the older ICC was very focused on serving up games, whereas the last three have moved the goalposts for chess servers. They have developed many excellent features. Indeed, today's armchair chess player is truly spoilt. It is not within the scope of this article to discuss these features, but servers are mentioned here as they are relevant with regard to accessing video content. Putting aside the paid content that is available depending on the level of your membership, there are a number of ways to watch free videos and streams via these servers.

When you log on to lichess you can see towards the top left of the page who is currently streaming and click the link to watch them. This is a good way to discover streamers you may otherwise have been unaware of. One such stream for me was 'PeshkaCh', aka Tihon Chernyaev, who was born in just 2010. Chess.com has a similar facility. When you hover over 'watch' on the left-hand panel of the front page you can see all the streamers currently broadcasting.

When there is an important online tournament like Arena Kings on Chess.com or the Titled Arena on lichess, there are a large number of streamers to choose from. In the latter event you will often find Magnus Carlsen playing. His monikers include 'Dr Drunkenstein' and 'manwithavan' which he used whilst playing on the move.

Chess24 provides a great way of following all the tournament games whilst also watching live commentary. As well as the St. Louis commentators, a couple of my favourite commentators you can watch this way are Peter Svidler and, less frequently, Peter Leko. Meanwhile you can track for yourself the progress of all a tournament's games on the same page as where the video is streaming.

FUN CLIPS

The Danny Gormally Show on GingerGM's YouTube channel features some great impersonations, while 'Worst Chess Stalemate Fails' is a hilarious collection of reactions to stalemate via Alexandra Botez's channel. Also worth a watch is ChessNetwork losing to scholar's mate and being unable to stop laughing.

Danny Gormally should consider a side-line as an impressionist. His take on some of the UK's GMs is spot on.

20th Royal Beacon Seniors Congress

Monday 4th – Friday 8th November

2 sections:
Genuine Seniors (65+)
"Juniors" (50+)

Entry forms downloadable on
keverelchess.com

You've Been Beckered!

Geoff Chandler imagines what might have happened if only Howard Staunton had decreed things differently all the way back in 1851

I blame Howard Staunton. In fact I was thinking of Staunton the day the vicar asked me to step in and do the Bingo calling at his church fete. That was a disaster, resulting in me getting mob-chased out of the building after calling out just a few balls with a chess slant.

"21 – Alekhine's Gun."

"77 – Armageddon."

"Number 8 – A smothered mate."

"39 – They lost on time."

By now the blue rinsed crowd of old dears were getting rather restless.

"Paul Morphy – It's number 40."

"Reuben Fine – Number 9."

One lady shouted out, "Number nine is doctors' orders!"

"Reuben Fine was a doctor," I replied continuing with:

"44 – The Phildor."

"17 – The Evergreen."

Mumbles, grumbles, a few boos and one "Get 'im off!".

The next ball was '88'. I showed it to the riled crowd and I heard them whispering. "Two fat ladies....88 is two fat ladies," and as they all stared at me, I proudly announced: "88 – A Back Rank Mate!"

Chaos. Cries of woe and despair were lost amongst the shouted threats to do me physical harm. Under a shower of accurately thrown Bingo marker pens I made for a side exit pausing only at the door to shout out: "89 – I resign."

So ended my short career as a Bingo caller, but no regrets and staying with numbers, do you recognise: 1044722? It's the ID number chessgames.com have given to game one of the Fischer-Spassky '72 match, and if Howard Staunton had been sharp enough then that number would have earned Fischer and Spassky millions.

We go back to London in 1851. Staunton has just organised the first chess tournament and clarified the rules of the game. All he had to do was declare that chess games were the copyright of the players involved and it would have been so.

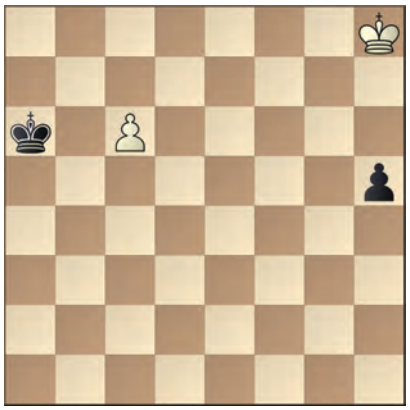
Every game would be assigned a unique number, as per chessgames.com, and the House of Chess Games Records (don't Google that – I've just made it up) would ensure every time that a game appeared in print, the players would get a percentage paid by whoever published the game.

One moment of creative thought was all it would have taken; one added paragraph to the rules and it would have been set in stone.

To avoid arguments of duplication with claims of 'I played it first', The House of Chess Games would pay out on a first to be in print basis, like they do with scientific discoveries. See how easy it would have been, which is why I blame Staunton.

Chess books would be expensive; in fact very expensive as the publishers would pass on the players fees to the readers. There would, of course. be a time limit: death. When a player died the publishers would only have to pay half the fee and, better still, if both players were dead then we would finally see for free the moves of a game these two played 50 years ago.

Problems and studies would also be copyright. Imagine how much Reti's famous study could be worth.



Having taken you to a place where The House of Chess Games exists, I won't push your patience any further by giving the solution.

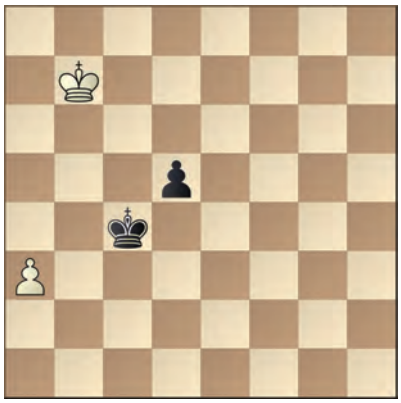
If studies were copyright then we may have been treated to a classic court case: Reti versus Becker. This study first appeared in *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung* in August 1921, submitted not by Richard Reti, but by one Albert Becker.

It transpires that Reti had shown Becker the study and Becker published it. Reti got the study put into his name via a letter he sent in 1922 saying he had shown it to some friends in Vienna. With a fee involved Becker may not have been so gracious in handing over the publishing rights to Reti and a new phrase would have entered the chess lexicon regarding stolen studies: 'You have been Beckered!'.

Howard Staunton could have made millions had he only decided moves were copyright.

The House of Chess Games would have had a merry time sorting that one out.

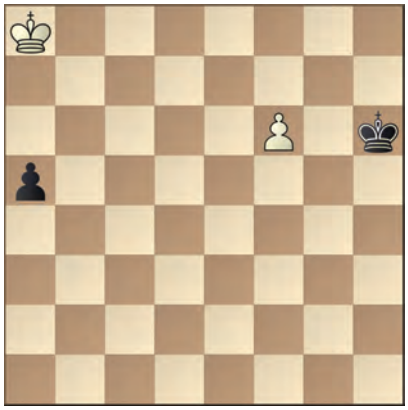
Reti would have to summon witnesses and reveal the inspiration for the study. It was Schlechter-Marco, Vienna? 1893.



White draws with 57 a4 ♔b4 58 ♔b6!,

and if 58...♔xa4 59 ♔c5 when he wins the d-pawn. If, instead, Black saves the d-pawn with 58...d4 then after 59 a5 both sides promote at the same time.

Of course, unscrupulous publishers would have 'a work around'. For instance, the Reti study could be mirrored.

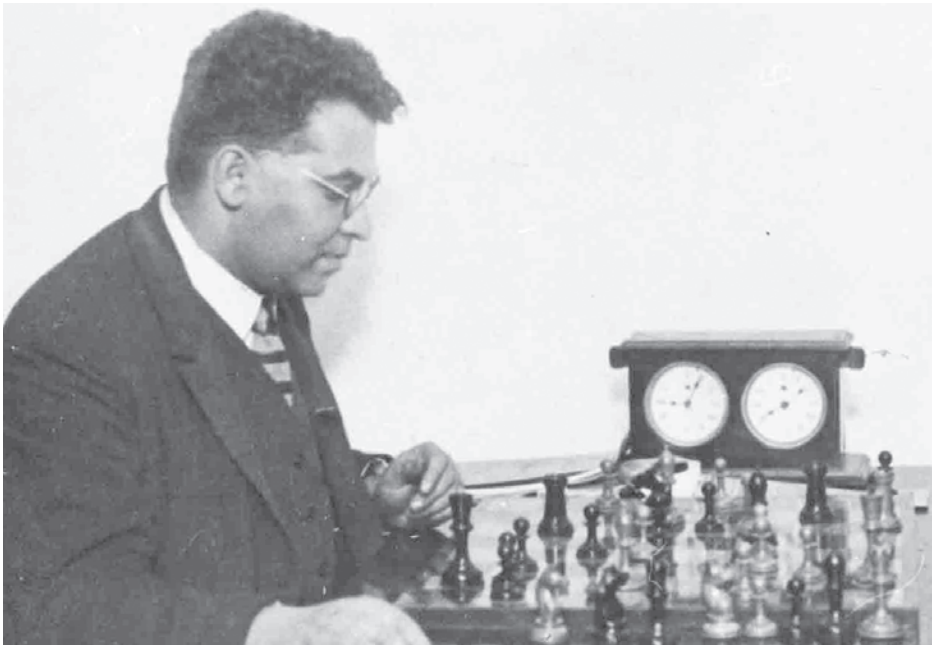


White draws with 1 ♔b7, etc.

Elsewhere, 1 e4 e5 games could start 1 e3 e6 2 e4 e5, etc, and publishing house tricks like this would have kept the lawyers at The House of Chess Games very busy.

Of course, today moves like 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 are not copyright. However, if I write, "One. pawn to e-four and Black replies, pawn to e-five and White plays on his second move Knight to f-three" then it is!

I mentioned game one of the Fischer-Spassky match. The moves are not copyright, but any written text along with the moves is. However, everything about game two is copyright free. There were no moves in that game as Fischer defaulted. In Bingo parlance that would be: 'Five O – A Fischer No Show.'



Did you know that Richard Reti's most famous study was initially ascribed to Albert Becker?

Forthcoming Events

October 3 **Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz**
www.hendonchessclub.com or call 07855 036537

October 4-6 **4NCL Congress, South Normanton**
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

October 4-6 **Surrey Congress, Kingston**
www.surreychesscongress.co.uk

October 5 **Bangor Rapidplay, County Down**
www.ulsterchess.org/events

October 11-13 **Dorset Congress, Bournemouth**
www.dorsetchess.co.uk or call 01202 536370

October 11-13 **West Wales Congress, Swansea**
www.welshchessunion.uk/calendar/ or call 01792 418711

October 12-18 **Isle of Man International**
iominternationalchess.com; Major & Minor sections

October 12 **Golders Green Rapidplay**
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

October 13 **Richmond Rapidplay**
www.rjcc.org.uk

October 18-20 **Dundee Congress**
www.dundee-congress.co.uk

October 19-20 **Hampstead U2200 Congress**
hampsteadchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

October 20-26 **Guernsey International**
www.guernseychessclub.org.gg; Open & Holiday sections

October 20 **Birmingham Rapidplay**
rapidplay.birminghamchess.org.uk

October 22 **Muswell Hill Rapidplay**
muswellhillchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

October 25-27 **Scarborough Congress**
www.scarboroughchesscongress.org.uk or call 01709 889854

October 26-27 **Bury St Edmunds Congress**
www.bsecongress.org.uk

October 27 **Letchworth Rapidplay**
letchworthchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

November 1-3 **4NCL International Congress, Hull**
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

November 1-3 **Central London Congress**
union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/chess/

November 1-3 **Hampshire Congress, Fareham**
www.hampshirechess.co.uk or call 02380 466118

November 2-3 **Witney Congress**
www.witneychess.co.uk or call 01993 708645

November 4-8 **Royal Beacon Seniors, Exmouth**
www.keverelchess.com; Senior & 'Junior' sections

And for the Online Connoisseur:
October 10-21 **FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss, Douglas**
iominternationalchess.com; Aronian, Carlsen, Caruana, Grischuk, Howell, Jones, McShane, Nakamura, Nepomniachtchi, etc.

Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King

The Grand Chess Tour has staged some superb events, but I can't help feel that the series needs to be refreshed. The players are (rightly) rewarded handsomely for their efforts, but it seems to me they have little incentive to strive for top honours when settling for a cosy mid-table position by playing safety-first chess will give them a healthy prize.

The same players are usually invited to these events with the result that they know each other too well and a draw is therefore often the result. Spectators need to see some variation in the participants too. I suspect that new members of the club would shake things up. There are many players in the top-50 who would enjoy the chance to break into the elite, and I have no doubt that they would do so, perhaps not on the first occasion, but given a chance in a couple of these tournaments. I could name Artemiev, Rapport, Vidit, Harikrishna, Duda...and there are others.

In the blitz and rapid events there are a few wildcard entries, and that has already had a positive effect. It was good to see Yu Yangyi play in the St. Louis tournaments: he shared first in the blitz and was joint third in the rapid. Immediately afterwards, the 25-year-old returned to China to play in the national league where he scored well and brought himself up to no.10 in the world on the live classical rating list. The battle to see whether it is India or China that dominates the chess world in the next decade is hotting up – but these players need to be given the opportunity.

In the St. Louis blitz tournament Yu defeated Magnus Carlsen twice, and we are going to look at one of those wins. There is almost nothing about this game that is strategic: the kings are on opposite sides of the board, and the minor pieces are massed in the middle, so calculation is absolutely necessary in order to do well. Reflection over long-term themes only carries you a little way: you could lose if you let your guard down for a moment.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

Yu Yangyi demonstrated in Saint Louis that there was no fluke about his second place in Norway earlier this year. The Chinese no.2 defeated Carlsen not once, but twice in the States.

Yu Yangyi-M.Carlsen
Saint Louis (blitz) 2019
Sicilian Dragon

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♗d7

Typical of Carlsen's strategy in blitz games: he avoids main lines and employs tricky side variations. This usually transposes into a more well-known system: the Richter-Rauzer after 6 ♗g5; perhaps a Scheveningen after 6 ♗e2; or the Dragon...

6 ♗e3 ♘g4 7 ♗c1 ♘c6 8 ♗e2 ♘f6 9 ♗e3 g6 10 ♕d2 ♗g7 11 0-0-0 h5

This is not strictly necessary – but it's a blitz game and subtleties tend to get ignored. Carlsen wants to stop any kingside expansion and perhaps ♗h6 too. 11...0-0 is normal.

12 f3

Three points. Preventing ...♘g4. 12 h3 (*three points*) performs the same task.

12 f4 (*two points*) takes on a lot of responsibility, considering that the g4-square and the e4-pawn are weakened. Nevertheless, if you are feeling alert enough...

12...♖c8

13 ♔b1

Five points. The rules for this Dragon position are somewhat different from usual. In positions where White doesn't play the bishop to c4, the best policy is to break with ...d5 (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 g6 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 7 f3 0-0 8 ♕d2 ♘c6 9 0-0-0 d5). In this case, the unusual move order with the bishop already on d7 means that ...d5 is impossible. Therefore, White can be a little more relaxed (at the moment), and get in some useful moves, particular as the kingside pawn advance has been prevented.

Playing the king to b1 is a good precaution: it's away from the semi-open c-file and the a2-pawn is guarded. In any case, it's not entirely clear how either side should be setting up in the centre, so it's good to see what's coming from the other side first.

13...♘e5

14 ♖he1

Four points. This continues the somewhat cagey policy and hints at playing through the middle of the board rather than attacking on the kingside.

14 h3 (*three points*) is more direct, covering the g4-square, so that g2-g4 or f3-f4 become legitimate options.

14 f4 is, I think, premature, leading to typical Dragon situations where an exchange sacrifice is on the cards. After 14...♘c4 15 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 the g4-square is available for the knight and the bishop; and watch out for ...♖xc3 and ...♘xe4.

What about 14 b3 to prevent the knight arriving on c4? 14...♕a5 practically forces 15 ♘d5 and, as usual in the Sicilian, the endgame is fine for Black.

14...0-0

15 h3

Three points. Better late than never.

15 f4 is still inadvisable: 15...♘eg4 16 ♗g1 (saving the all-important dark-squared bishop is necessary) 16...e5!, when White will have a hard time controlling the tactics on the c-file and the long diagonal.

15...a6

Remarkably, despite the curious move order and hesitant last few moves, this path has been trodden before. Palac-Sanchez, Cap d'Agde 2010, continued 15...♘c4 16 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 17 g4 b5 18 e5 dxe5 19 ♘b3 with the start of insane complications.

16 g4

Three points. Finally launching the attack.

16 f4 (*three points*) was also good, considering that 16...♘c4 17 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 18 e5 already looks promising for White; and the typical exchange sacrifice 16...♖xc3 17 ♕xc3 ♘xe4 18 ♕b3 isn't terrifying when White's pieces are so well coordinated. If 16...♘c6, White can safely guard the centre with 17 ♗f3. Black has lost a lot of time and is in danger of getting squashed.

16...b5

17 ♘d5

Three points. A logical move. Black's knight on f6 holds the kingside together: if it is removed then the h5-pawn will be vulnerable.

There were plenty of decent alternatives:

a) 17 ♗h6 (*three points*) exchanging off the bishop on g7 weakens the kingside, and makes White's queenside feel more secure.

b) 17 gxh5 (*two points*) is a direct way of playing, dragging the knight offside – 17...♘xh5 – and therefore enabling 18 f4 ♘c4 19 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 20 f5, but it still isn't easy to crack 20...e6.

c) 17 ♗g5 (*two points*) increases the pressure, although the tricky 17...e6, covering the d5-square and so threatening ...b4 winning the knight on c3, keeps Black in the game.

d) 17 ♖g1 (*two points*) is calm, putting the rook back where it belongs.

e) 17 f4 (no credit) would be met by 17...b4 18 ♘d5 ♘xe4 – which is fantastically, but unnecessarily, messy.

17...♘c4

18 ♗xc4

One point.

18...bxc4

19 ♘xf6+

One point. The last two moves could have been interchanged. *Balance your score* if you played this on the last turn.

19 ♗h6 (*one point*) is also strong, exchanging off the crucial bishop on g7.

19...♗xf6

20 gxh5

Three points. Carrying on regardless. One could also put the brakes on by playing 20 c3 (*one point*) preventing Black from playing the same, but it would give an opportunity for your opponent to bolster their defences.

20...c3

21 ♕g2

Five points. The road is open and there is just one flimsy barrier at the end.

21 bxc3 hands over the initiative: 21...♕a5 22 hxg6 ♖b8+ 23 ♘b3 ♗xc3 and White is in trouble. Black's king is surprisingly safe.

21...♔h7

If 21...cxb2, White should just keep going: 22 hxg6. The pawn on b2 blocks the avenue for attack.

22 hxg6+

Two points. 22 f4 (*two points*) is also strong, intending another push with either e4-e5 or f4-f5, depending on how Black plays.

22...fxg6

23 b3

Four points. At this moment, a prudent

choice, solidifying the queenside before pursuing the attack further. Instead, 23 f4 isn't completely clear: 23...cxb2 24 f5 ♕e8. It's a scramble, but Black is still in the game.

23...♕a5

24 f4

Three points. At last! This takes control over some key squares and sets up another push with e4-e5 or f4-f5 under the right circumstances.

24 ♖g1 (*three points*) was also a good move.

24 ♗c1 (*two points*) covers the dark squares and makes absolutely sure there is no chance of checkmate, but it's a bit tame.

24...♖c4

Carlsen obviously doesn't like the flow of the game and takes a radical step to change its course. In general, that's a good policy, not just in a blitz game.

25 e5

Six points. A good practical decision. In a blitz game there isn't the time to work out whether the rook can be taken, but intuition should tell you that the struggle would suddenly switch towards the queenside and defence. Not what you want. Instead, Yu opens the centre for the rooks.

Was it possible to grab the rook? In fact, yes, but only by navigating a narrow and perilous path: 25 bxc4 ♗xd4 26 ♔a1! (a crucial move; instead, 26 ♖xd4 ♕a3 cuts off the king's escape: 27 ♗c1 ♖b8+ 28 ♔a1 ♖b2 and mate) 26 ...♗xe3 and now the only way for White to win is to launch the final attack with 27 f5! (27 ♖xe3? ♕a3 28 ♖xc3 ♕xc3+ wins) 27...g5 28 ♕f3 ♗f4 29 ♕h5+ ♔g8 30 ♕g6+ ♔h8 31 h4 and the kingside opens. Considering the difficulty of this variation, I'm giving no points for taking the rook. Nevertheless, I find it an instructive variation, showing that if White keeps his eyes on the prize of checkmate and calculates correctly, there is a way through.

25 f5 (*three points*) overloads Black: 25...♖g8 26 bxc4. Having dragged one rook into defence, taking the other rook is not only possible, but the position is easier to defend than in the variation above: 26...♗xd4 (otherwise the knight blocks on b3) 27 ♖xd4 ♕b4+ (27...♕a3 is too slow: 28 ♗c1 ♖b8+ 29 ♔a1 ♖b2 30 ♕xg6+ and mate follows) 28 ♔c1 ♕b2+ 29 ♔d1 ♕b1+ 30 ♗c1 and the king has escaped. There is a lot of detail to these variations, but the crucial point is that 25 f5 persists with the kingside attack, preventing Black from continuing his own attack.

25...dxe5

26 fxe5

Two points. Once White's rooks enter the game, the pressure on Black will be unbearable.

26...♗xe5

Before we plunge on with the rest of the game, instead of this, how would you respond to 26...♕xe5? Answer on the next line.

27 ♘f3 (*two points*) is strong, attacking the queen and unmasking an attack on the bishop on d7. After 27...♕c7 28 ♘g5+ ♔g7 29 ♖g1 there is no satisfactory defence to the attack on g6. Leaving the rook dangling on c4 is practical and pleasant: it isn't doing much, and there could come a time when taking it can be done without any hassle.

In fact, 27 bxc4 (*one point*) can be played immediately considering that Black's queen is so far from the queenside, although it isn't really in the spirit of the game.

27 ♕g5

Six points. Well spotted. The lateral pin ensures that the bishop is unable to retreat to cover the h6-square and therefore the queen breaks through to the king.

27 bxc4 (*three points*) is possible as 27...♕a3 28 ♗c1 ♖b8+ 29 ♘b3 is game over; and 27...♗xd4 28 ♖xd4 ♖b8+ 29 ♔a1 ♖b2 30 ♖h4+ ♔g7 31 ♗d4+ leads to mate. If you are comfortable with calculation and saw enough of these lines – fine. But I dare say that the game continuation is a bit easier.

27...♖c7

28 ♖g1

One point. This is fine.

28 ♕h6+ (*one point*) is perhaps even easier: 28...♔g8 29 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 30 ♖g1 ♖f7 31 ♘e6. It's like an avalanche.

28...♖f6

29 ♘f3

One point. A good move, as is 29 ♕h6+ (*two points*) 29...♔g8 30 ♖xg6+ ♖xg6 31 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 32 ♘e6 ♕e5 33 ♗d4. Not a difficult variation.

29...♗f5

30 ♕h6+ 1-0

Two points. It's mate in three: 30...♔g8 31 ♖d8+ ♔f7 32 ♘g5#, so Black resigned.

If you struggled with this game, then typical attacking plans, the initiative and calculation are clearly areas that you need to work on. In spite of Magnus's dominance in the chess world, it is interesting to see that some players, at least, do not fear him. He knows that he can never relax his guard.

Now add up your points:

0-15	Unlucky
16-30	Average Club Player
31-39	Strong Club Player
40-44	FIDE Master
45-52	International Master
53-60	Grandmaster

Ed. – If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.

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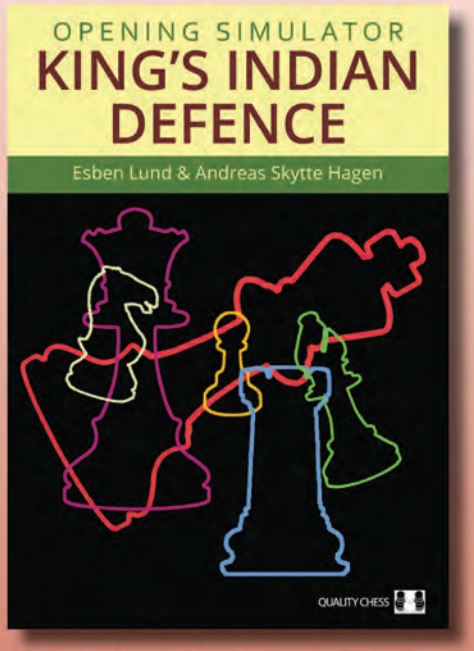

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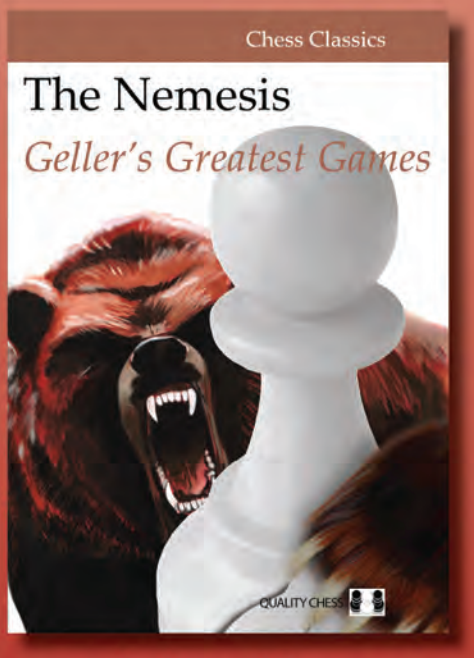

Hardcover – 480 pages

The Nemesis – Geller's Greatest Games by Efim Geller

Efim Geller (1925-1998) was one of the giants of Soviet chess. He beat the World Champions more often than he lost, and had healthy plus scores over Bobby Fischer and Mikhail Botvinnik among others. So he deserves the nickname of **The Nemesis**. This book contains:

- Over 130 of Geller's greatest games, annotated by the man himself
- Many annotated games never before published in English

Geller never became World Champion but he won everything else – two Soviet titles and ten Olympiad gold medals are just a few of his accomplishments. Geller was also noted for his ability to share his wisdom – he coached World Champions Boris Spassky and Anatoly Karpov.

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Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

I wrote this article when I was 12 years old. At least in my head I did. I am now nearer picking up a pension than wearing a school tie, but after decades of travail and hope I met my chess hero. This is a two-part article to tell you about it – because I have waited long enough. This issue will be more about the story and next time I will give the all-important game, annotated with my thoughts and feelings.

So, who is this caped crusader? Well his favourite player was Capablanca, he is the 12th world champion, born in the Urals in Russia, and is known as Tolya. You are way ahead of me. It is, of course, none other than Anatoly Yevgenyevich Karpov.

When I learned to play chess at the tender but still late age of 12, Karpov was the world champion and he stood atop the chess mountain. True, he became champ 'by default' since Bobby Fischer refused to defend his title, but Karpov more than justified his position by entering all the top tournaments around the world and winning them, proving that there was no-one better at the time.

The reader can easily Google 'Tolya', so I shall make this more personal. How on earth did I finally get to meet him? Well a friend of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Chess Association, Grandmaster Raymond Keene, knew that I wanted to meet my hero and had been indefatigable in helping me 'track him down'. I should say that eminent chess photographer David Llada had been trying too. I received an email from Ray saying that Karpov would be giving a simultaneous exhibition at the French Chess Championships in the city of Chartres in August and that I might like to contact the organisers to see if I could secure a place.

Play him? That was more than I could hope for; I would simply like to meet him. Well if you don't buy a ticket... I contacted the organisers (with a pleading email), and one of their senior team, Christophe Phillipe, confirmed that I could have a place. I couldn't quite believe it. This was several weeks before the event and I was not going to get over excited as anything could happen to thrust a spanner in the works between then and the big day. It was going to cost me a fair amount for my accommodation and travel, but it was going to be worth it.

Thus, it was that on Tuesday 20th August I took three trains from the UK to Chartres, which lies near Le-Mans, south-west of Paris, and 10 hours later I was embedded into my hotel. I would not play Karpov until the Thursday so I had some time to see the city, which is quite beautiful, and the next day to visit the actual French Championships being held several kilometres away. The simul would be held here, in the city square at night – which promised to be quite spectacular.

I spent a marvellous day in the sunshine exploring Chartres with its awesome cathedral, brilliantly illuminated at night (*see photograph*), and lovely churches. I was also truly fortunate to stumble upon an exhibition of sculptures by Christophe Charbonnel. I found his work to be utterly compelling and my artist friend back in UK was insanely jealous that I had found this exhibition as she has always admired his work too.

There is much to see if one only looks. Take a stroll down any side street with its narrow, cobbled floor and there might be an ancient door, some interesting architecture or simply an incredible display of flowers boxed outside a window. I felt alive, energetic and happy in the sunshine. All this, and the big moment was still to come.

Let's just get to August 22nd, shall we? Karpov would begin his simul at 8.30pm, so I was told to be there at around 8pm, find Christophe and take my place. I was there at 7.30pm – as were many of the other players, unsurprisingly. It was a warm evening with a clear sky, perfect for outdoor chess. If we could rely more on the weather in the UK, we could do much more of this. There must have been 60 boards set up in Place Marceau, and as I took my position, I began to wonder how on earth Karpov was going to take on this many people. It was rammed. This was how chess events should be.

The atmosphere began to build and there were many announcements, all in French of course. I can only just about get by in French, so I could not grasp everything, but it soon became clearer as six-time French Women's Champion Sophie Milliet and two other masters arrived that they would be taking on the majority of the field. Anatoly Karpov was playing only 15 boards, of which I was one. No wonder then that these were the only boards with 'reserved' signs on them. I felt like a special guest amongst 14 other special guests. I owe the French Chess Federation and Bachar Kouatly a great debt of gratitude for allowing me this privilege.

Karpov arrived a little late and the cameras began to go off. There he stood, taking in the scene, wearing a smart blue suit. I had seen him the day before at the playing venue, so I knew that his once black hair had now turned grey and that was very closely cropped. He was a little shorter than I expected, but what struck me was how small and quite delicate his hands were, betraying his 68 years. As people were talking to him, he was scrutinising our boards, sizing people up. He smiled at some point, but let's be clear that (in chess terms) this man, like Kasparov, is a killer. He just wants to win. It's in his DNA.

I was not at all nervous. I wanted to be, as it would have made me focus more, but I was just happy to be there. The previous couple of minutes could be analogous to Karpov standing at the O.K. Corral sizing up the opposition, then suddenly he draws his gun. He approached the first board and bang, bang, bang! Battle had commenced.

This was it. I was actually playing him. Of course, 15 boards are not that many for a GM to play, let alone one of Karpov's strength who is still 2617 on the FIDE rating list. No passes were allowed at all and he moved pretty quickly early on. We shook hands and he played 1 c4 much to my annoyance as I had counted on 1 d4 and prepared something especially for him. I shall reveal what that was and how I still worked it into the game in the second part to this report next time.

I can say though that as the sky became

darker and the outdoor mobile lights were turned on, the atmosphere was electric. As some moment I looked to my left and behind me. The crowd was five deep, straining to get a look. It reminded me of those old photos in Moscow when people used to flock in their hundreds to see the likes of Botvinnik, Tal and Petrosian play. This was no ordinary simul, being outdoors. That meant that there was noise from passers-by and also the stage behind me where GM Bachar Kouatly was playing a live blindfold game, which was being commented upon over the PA. Sophie and the other masters were strutting their stuff on their boards and there was a hum of activity all around. Amongst all of the madness there was a quiet rhythm...the rhythm of chess.

I could smell cigar smoke (it must have been like this in the old cigar divans in London, Paris and Vienna), as well as bread from the nearby shops. I could hear the chatter of children putting questions to their parents who were in any event too distracted to talk to their offspring as they strained to capture that all-important image of one of the modern-day chess greats.

Time and again Karpov appeared at my board, like a magnificent hummingbird visiting a flower. I began quite well, but made an early positional error which meant that I had to ignore everything around me and focus on the board. I won't give much away except to say that I was not beaten in some shameful miniature – indeed, I was the very last man standing – or rather sitting.

One of the organisers, Eric Didier, came up and said, "Englishman, you are the last to finish!". Karpov had beaten everyone else and he would beat me too, but not before we played some moves one to one in a rook and pawn endgame. Karpov verus Portman, *mano-a-mano* playing chess surrounded by onlookers, photographers and people filming. If you had told me this would happen when I was 12, I would never have believed you. This was heaven under a heavenly night sky adorned with stars and the dreams of billions of people. My dream had just become a reality – such was my kismet.

At the end, we exchanged a few words and there was a big round of applause. Mostly for him of course, but I had some nice comments too about being the last to go down fighting and a few handshakes. Most importantly I wanted him to autograph one of my favourite books in my collection – *Karpov on Karpov, Memoirs of a Chess World Champion*, which he duly did. He also signed the scoresheet and another of his books, so I will treasure those. He is not keen to give autographs as I had observed the night before at his masterclass session and here, he would do so only for the players and a couple of lucky fans in the melee desperate to obtain his autograph after the game. There was only a short window for them before he slipped away into his waiting car and off into the night.

It was over...

When I returned to my hotel, I replayed the images of the last few hours in my head and I could barely sleep all night. Honestly, I was like a child at Christmas. I shall leave the subject of his masterclass that I attended for another day, but I asked him about chess in prisons, which as many know is my passion. His reply was outstanding and worthy of an article in itself.

For now. I hope that you shared my childlike joy at meeting and playing my chess hero. 43 years was an incredibly long wait, but the stars finally aligned. My thanks to GM Raymond Keene, the French Chess Federation and all associated with the event. When Anatoly Karpov pushed that first pawn, I truly understood the meaning of *joie de vivre.*

Carl had a lovely time in Chartres, exploring its many cobbled streets, impressive cathedral (adjacent page), and seeing an exhibition of Christophe Charbonnel's sculptures, including 'LUG' (left). Below we see the town square given over to chess. Sophie Milliet is no mean player, but has the legendary 12th world champion, Toyla himself, just given her some assistance before striding over to tackle Carl and 14 other disciples?

'You're thinking that long, and in a simul?' Carl Portman may look nervous, but he was no rabbit in the headlights when his dream became reality and he took on his hero, Anatoly Karpov.

You Never Know...

Bob Jones reports from the Paignton Congress and has news of a possible record

It's a fact of chess life that in years when the British Championship comes to Torquay, entries for the Paignton Congress just 26 days later tend to fall off slightly, and so it was this time. And it was with mixed emotions that Committee members heard, midway through the event, that the British was to return to Torquay again next year, due to negotiations with its intended venue in Southport falling through at the last minute.

The Congress Committee this year had tried to enliven the Premier by making it a 9-round tournament in order to attract aspiring norm-seekers, and in the hope that this might provide local GM Keith Arkell with some slightly sterner opposition than of late.

In fact, even though he was a clear winner again this year, he did have some good tussles and had to concede a couple of draws. However, there was also an unexpected response in that one or two players, who perhaps should have been in lower sections, entered the Premier with the view that "If I'm going to drive from way up north at least I want the two extra games for doing so". Also entered were 12-year-old twins from Malta – Matthew and Luke Fleri, with grades of 180 and 128 respectively.

His victory at this year's Paignton means that Keith Arkell has now won the tournament 25 times.

With regard to Paignton, Keith always takes it very seriously and gives it his all, which is appreciated by players and public alike. After this year's event, Keith is tentatively wondering whether he has set a world record in that this was his 25th win at Paignton in what has always been an open, international tournament. Has anyone scored more first places in the same annual event?

The details of his impressive run are below. Could it be a record? You never know...

Local chess congresses could never be considered spectator sports, and Paignton is no exception. Its original venue of Oldway Mansion, by virtue of its architectural and botanical splendours, could attract visitors who occasionally might have wandered into the Ballroom to see what all the people were doing, but would quickly beat a hasty retreat when they realised they'd intruded on a chess tournament. The current venue, Livermead House, once the home of the writer Charles Kingsley and while enjoying splendid sea views all around Torbay, does not attract random visitors in the same way.

The one or two who did occasionally wander in appeared to be local residents who lived within walking distance, and they did stop at one or two boards and appear to be taking it all in. But who were they, and if they were not active players, how could they possibly appreciate the positional nuances of an Arkell masterpiece brewing on top board? Were they simply poseurs?

They might be, but then again you never know. For example, back in the late 1990s such a man would wander into Oldway from time to time. Aged in his 70s, and smartly dressed, he would peruse the bookstall where Peter Clarke and I were on duty, and then move on to look at the games going on in the Ballroom. He would come back to the bookstall and have a few words with Peter before going on his way. "Who's that?" I asked. "That's Peter Harris," he explained, as if

Year	Position	Points		Year	Position	Points		Year	Position	Points
1986	1st	5½		1995	1st=	6		2011	1st	6
1987	2nd=	5		1998	1st	6½		2012	1st	6
1988	1st	7		2002	1st=	5½		2013	1st	6
1989	1st	6		2003	1st	6		2014	1st	5½
1990	1st	6		2004	1st	6		2015	1st	7
1991	1st	6		2007	1st	6		2016	1st	6½
1992	1st=	5½		2008	1st=	6½		2017	1st=	6½
1993	2nd=	5½		2009	1st	6		2018	1st	6½
1994	1st=	6		2010	1st	6½		2019	1st	8

Former British Ladies Champion Dinah Norman en route to yet another Paignton women's prize.

I should know, but I was none the wiser.

It was only later that the pieces fitted together. It was the same Peter Harris who represented England in the first World Junior Championship back in 1951. That was an 18-man, 11-round tournament involving players from all over Europe, Argentina and Australia, and was organised as part of the Staunton Centenary activities of that year. Boris Ivkov from Belgrade came first, while Peter Harris, from Smethwick in Staffordshire, finished fourth equal with Bent Larsen. It's probably fair to say that the Dane lived up to this early promise rather more than Harris, who was nevertheless an outstanding junior long before the 1970s 'explosion'. For example, at Paignton in 1960, Harris came fourth equal with Peter Clarke, whom he beat in their individual game, and ahead of 16 others including Barden, Mardle, Mabbs and Milner-Barry.

In recent years two other local residents have been prone to walk in from time to time; alone, unknown and unrecognised by most players. One is studious-looking, quietly spoken and his main focus of interest is Arkell's game. Little wonder as it's Keith's landlord, P.C. Griffiths, where their address is, appropriately, Winner Street, Paignton.

Until Keith came along, Peter Griffiths had won the Paignton Premier four times: in 1973 ahead of Michael Stean, in 1977 shared with Beech, in 1979 equal with Hempson, and in 1981 equal with Walden and Noel-Johnson. He first learned the game, quite by chance, at his school, Bishop Vesey's Grammar in Sutton Coldfield. He was the only boy to take sandwiches for his lunch, but one day he was joined by a boy who'd broken his arm and couldn't handle the cutlery so had a packed lunch. The other boy, unable to go out to play either, suggested they try something productive and suggested a game of chess, which was unknown to Peter. The rest is history.

Peter's chess CV could fill several pages, but a few standout landmarks include representing England as a junior in the Glorney Cup where, in 1963, the team included the likes of Vic Knox and David Levy. The following year he was alongside Basman, Hartston and Keene. He followed this up by winning the Staffordshire Open and Midland Open in 1965. On leaving school he joined the Post Office who had their own Europe-wide tournaments and in 1971 took board one for the British team in Munich. He then turned professional, coaching, publishing five books, writing articles for *Chess* and *BCM*, and working alongside Ritson-Morry producing bulletins at Hastings.

Bill Ritson-Morry was a central figure in this story as he was always on the look-out for new, young chess talent in his native Birmingham, giving them every opportunity, while pushing them to play in big junior events and county teams. As with Peter, so with our other mystery spectator, Jon Lawrence.

Jon is four years older than Peter, but their path through the Birmingham hierarchy, pushed by Ritson, was very similar. The difference was that Peter admits it took him three or four years to really get the hang of the game and acquire the self-knowledge that he could win things, whereas Jon took to it like a duck to water. Within a year, aged 12, he was playing club chess in the Birmingham League for the Kynoch club, where an uncle worked at the munitions factory and arranged for the boy to be admitted through the high security gates on chess club nights.

Like Peter, Jon's CV would run to several pages, but a few highlights will have to suffice. In 1956 he was joint British Under-15 Champion and three years later joint Under-18 Champion. In 1960 he captained the Glorney Cup winning team and then, in 1961, after a series of tough qualifying tournaments, he played in the British Championship as a teenager and finished on 50%. In 1963 he again qualified and scored 50% having played, among others, A.R.B. Thomas, Norman Littlewood, Adrian Hollis, Gerald Abrahams, Frank Parr and George Wheatcroft – he was in notable company. In 1967 there was an inter-union match at Slough: MCCU vs SCCU. The top board results say it all:

1 Jon Lawrence	½-½	Jonathan Penrose
2 David Anderton	0-1	Ray Keene
3 Peter Griffiths	½-½	Bob Wade

But where do the real top dogs fit into his CV – the world champions? Jon had the chance to cross swords with two of them. After playing at Hastings in 1961/2 Botvinnik gave three simuls, including one in Birmingham, where he was happy to offer Jon a draw, getting the tough ones out of the way early. Tal did likewise, but only as they were the only two left playing.

In 1969, aged 27, Jon decided to take a sabbatical year, which became two, then three, and he found the hunger had gone; the motivation was no longer there, and he never went back. The one exception being an out-of-the-blue invitation to take part in a small, invitation quickplay event in Teignmouth in 1983 with the aim of giving experience to some of the very promising Paignton juniors. He came first equal...with Michael Adams.

Jon did get involved in postal chess for a time and came second equal in the 1969 British Postal Championship behind Slade Milan, the six-time champion. He now contents himself with problem-solving and qualifies every year for the final at Eton College.

So, as you can see, you can never be quite sure who you're standing next to at a football match...or a chess congress.

2019 Paignton Congress

Ron Bruce Premier: 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 8/9, 2 Justin Horton (Streatham) 6½, 3 Thomas Villiers (Barnet) 6.

Rowena Bruce Challengers: 1 Alan Barton (Hastings) 5/7, 2-4 John Bass (Richmond), Graham Bolton (Exeter), Richard Bryant (Oswestry) 5.

Bloodworth Intermediate: 1-3 Phil Foley (Upminster), Jacques Parry (Coulsdon), Martin Page (Insurance) 5.

Walker Minor: 1 Barry Miles (Coulsdon) 6, 2-3 Joseph Farrell (Metropolitan), Tim O'Sullivan (Aylesbury) 5½.

Boniface Under-180 AM: 1 Vladimirs Bovtr-amovics (Woking) 4½/5, 2 Richard Bryant (Oswestry) 4, 3 Dave Siddall (Carlisle) 3½.

Thynne Under-135 AM: 1-8 Peter Wood (Hastings), Paul Foster (Medway), Norman Andrews (York), Barry Miles (Coulsdon), Malcolm Roberts (Holmes Chapel), Barry Kocan (Basingstoke), Geoff Naldrett (Gerrards Cross), Christine Constable (Bude) 3½.

Pula Stars

Matthew Lunn reports back from his busman's holiday in Croatia

Our Executive Editor once said to me that only a chess player would go on holiday in the knowledge that it'll be stressful. Whether it's the British Championship or a sojourn abroad, the summer tournament is a key part of many of our calendars. That unique cocktail of frantic preparation and nerve-wracking, attritional games is quickly addictive, and its daily consumption dominates the holiday routine.

For those craving summer sun, I can highly recommend Pula. Famed for its Roman amphitheatre, wine-making and truffles, it is also home to exceptional pizza, endless portions of calamari, and a chess tournament held just off the Verudela marina. Hosting the usual mix of seasoned GMs and underrated juniors, the event boasted a snappy time control (90 minutes for all the moves with 30 seconds per move throughout), and a civilised 16.30 start time. There was also an additional incentive to win, as those playing White in the bottom half of the draw had to play 10 kuna to rent a clock from the organisers, in the event that they hadn't brought their own.

Desperation to avoid becoming a 'clock renter' characterised much of my tournament, and whilst I was successful, my results were decidedly mixed. As outlined in my article in the August *CHESS*, a bad loss against an 1820 in round four left me playing a string of strong, lower-rated juniors, where I learnt a great deal at the expense of my FIDE rating. The final of these opponents, with whom I halved out in short order, delivered the upset of the tournament in the very first round, dispatching veteran Croatian IM Milan Franic after the latter made a critical error.

R.Olenik Campa-M.Franic
Round 1

Black has been pressing for some moves, and White is struggling for a plan.

43 ♖xg5

A good practical idea, as although the open g-file gives Black fantastic compensation for the pawn, White has to mix things up somehow.

43...♖xg5!?

A nice idea, but with best play White should be able to equalise.

43...♗xe3 looks stronger: 44 ♖xg8+ (44 ♕xh4? ♗xg5 45 ♕f2 ♗xd2 46 ♕xd2 ♘d4 leaves Black with a winning position) 44...♖xg8 45 ♕xe3 ♕h3 46 ♕f2 ♘d4 and although White is a (doubled) pawn up, Black's pieces are immensely dangerous, whilst the contrast in minor piece quality speaks for itself.

44 ♕xh4 ♗xe3 45 ♖g2

An important resource, and one which Black may have underestimated. After 45 ♖d1 ♘d4 Black's pieces are brilliantly coordinated – g1 and h2 are easy targets for the rooks, whilst the f3-pawn is begging to be replaced by the knight.

45...♖xg2 46 ♔xg2 ♖g8+ 47 ♔f1

47 ♔h3 invites 47...♖g5, restricting the queen and preparing to bring the knight into the game.

47...♖g1+

47...♖g5 doesn't work here, as White's king is far better placed after 48 ♔e2 ♗f4 49 ♕f2.

48 ♔e2

And we reach a critical position. What is Black's best idea?

48...♗g5?

It looks as if Black has all the time in the world to improve his pieces, and squeeze White out of the game. Instead, 48...♗f4 should lead to a fairly level position, although White must play accurately: 49 ♕f6+ ♔g8 50 ♕xd6 ♘d4+ 51 ♔f2 (51 ♔d3? ♖d1+ 52 ♔c3 ♘e2+ wins the queen) 51...♖a1 and although Black is winning a piece, 52 f6 stops him from co-ordinating an attack: 52...♖xa2+ 53 ♔f1 and Black can either repeat the position, or play 53...♘e6 54 ♕b8+ ♘f8 and try and force a mistake, though a draw is the likely result.

49 ♕h5!

This turns the tables completely – ♔f2 is now a winning idea, and therefore the f-pawn must drop.

49...h6 50 ♕xf7 ♘d4+ 51 ♔f2

After 51 ♔d3 Black can force a repetition with 51...♖d1+ (or 51...♖f1 52 ♕f8+ and White forces the repetition instead) 52 ♔c3 ♗d2+ 53 ♔b2 ♗c1+ 54 ♔c3 (54 ♔b1? ♗xa3# would be disappointing) 54...♗d2+.

51...♖a1

Now, unlike the variations after 48...♗f4, White can play...

52 f6

...with the decisive win of material.

52...♖xa2+

Forcing White to find one more accurate move.

53 ♔f1!

Correct:

a) 53 ♔g1? loses after 53...♗e3+ 54 ♔f1 (54 ♔h1 ♖a1+ transposes) 54...♖a1+ (54...♖f2+? is only good enough to draw: 55 ♔e1 ♘xf3+ 56 ♔d1 ♖d2+ 57 ♔c1 ♖g2+ 58 ♔d1 and White threatens ♕e8+ followed by f7, so Black must repeat) 55 ♔g2 ♖g1+ 56 ♔h3 and Black has time to play 56...♘e2!. The threat is ...♘f4+ followed by ...♗f2#, and any queen check is well met by ...♖g8. This can only be stopped by giving up queen for rook, after which Black has a trivial win.

b) 53 ♔g3? loses to the following forcing

line: 53...♗f4+ 54 ♔g4 ♖g2+ 55 ♔h5 ♖xh2+ 56 ♔g4 (56 ♔g6 ♖g2+ transposes) 56...♖g2+ 57 ♔h5 (57 ♔h3 ♖g3+ 58 ♔h4 ♘xf3+ 59 ♔h5 ♖g5+ 60 ♔xh6 ♖f5+ 61 ♔g6 ♘h4# is absolutely delightful) 57...♖g5+ 58 ♔xh6 ♖g7+ 59 ♔h5 ♖xf7.

c) 53 ♔e1? and Black can force a draw with 53...♘xf3+ 54 ♔f1 ♘d2+ 55 ♔e1 ♘f3+.

53...♗xf6

Or 53...♖a1+ 54 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 55 ♔h3 when Black has run out of checks, so must still give up the bishop.

54 ♕xf6+ ♔h7 55 ♕xd6 ♘xf3

In a hopeless position, Black drops material.

56 ♕e7+ ♔g6 57 ♕e6+ ♔g7 58 ♕g4+ ♘g5 59 h4 1-0

It was a mixed bag for the British contingent, with standout performances by British Under-11 Champion Sohum Lohia, Charles Higgie and Grant Bucher, whose year's sabbatical from competitive chess was followed by a fine draw against a Slovenian GM. David Grant, one of the finest tacticians on the London chess circuit, had an uncharacteristically challenging tournament, but nonetheless produced some spectacular games.

Notes by David Grant

Here I faced a talented Austrian junior in an extremely sharp game, which presented a myriad of tactics and interesting lines.

K.Vicze-D.Grant
Round 6
Scotch Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗c4 ♘f6 5 e5 d5 6 ♗b5 ♘e4 7 ♘xd4 ♗c5

Sharper than the more popular 7...♗d7.

8 ♗e3 0-0 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 11 ♗xc6 ♖b8 12 0-0

White has followed the main line until now, but deviates by castling instead of grabbing another pawn with 12 ♕xd5.

12...♗a6 13 ♖e1 ♖xb2 14 ♗xd5

14 ♕d4 can be met by 14...♖xc2, and if 15 ♘a3 ♘b3!.

14...♘d3 15 cxd3 ♕xd5 16 ♘c3 ♕d4 17 ♘e4

Formerly of Leeds and Durham Universities, David Grant now plays for Muswell Hill, as well as Sussex Martlets in the 4NCL. He is especially dangerous in 1 e4 e5 and Open Sicilian positions.

I was in preparation until this move. Black should be comfortably better after regaining the pawn with 17...♗xd3, but instead I embark on a superficial plan to activate my second rook which is already sensibly placed, defending the back rank and f7.

17...♖d8 18 ♕h5 ♖d5?

Handing White the initiative and severely weakening the black king.

19 ♖e3 ♖e2?

I had originally planned 19...♗xd3, but was deterred by 20 ♖f3 ♖d7 21 e6, missing that 21...♖b5! saves the day. 19...♖e2 complicates things, but is objectively losing.

20 ♖b1?

The rook had to move, but 20 ♖f1 is the quickest way to a large advantage, as Black cannot simultaneously deal with the hanging rook on e2 and the threats of ♘g5. A sample line is 20...♖xe3 21 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 22 ♔h1 ♖d7 23 e6 ♕xd3 24 exf7+ ♔f8 25 ♕c5+ ♖d6 26 ♖e1 with some advantage for White.

20...♖b5?

I was correct to create more back-rank threats, but 20...♖b2 helps to diminish the size of White's advantage.

21 ♖c1 ♖xe3 22 ♘g5!!

My young opponent showed her tactical prowess by leaving the rook alone and attacking my king directly. The following moves are more or less forced:

22...♕d7 23 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 24 fxe3 ♖xe5 25 ♕h8+ ♔e7 26 ♕xg7 ♖f5

Here White erred, just when 27 g4 should secure the win after navigating a few more complications. In mutual time-trouble, White, hoping to hang on to her d-pawn, offered me a counter-attacking resource:

27 d4? ♕c6!

Creating my own threats against White's king, as 28 ♖xc6?? falls to 28...♖f1#.

28 ♕e5+

Both sides leave their queen *en prise*.

28...♔f8?

I played this believing I had a repetition after 29 ♕h8+, but had White found the brilliant resource 29 ♘e6+!! instead she would still be winning. Therefore the computer suggests that 28...♔d8 is the way to go when White's big advantage has dissipated.

29 ♕h8+ ♔e7 30 ♕e5+ ♔f8 ½-½

I left the board realising I had dodged a bullet, and also amazed at the variations and tactical shots the game had produced.

I dodged a bullet against the same opponent a round later.

M.Lunn-K.Vicze
Round 7

Here White has an unusual tactic, which achieves a winning position.

19 ♗xg7! ♖e6

19...♔xg7 20 ♕g4+ ♔h8 21 ♖xd7 wins back the piece, with interest.

20 ♗a1

With a none-too-subtle threat. 20 ♖xd7? ♕xd7 21 ♕g4 fails due to 21...f5.

20...♖g6

20...♗a6 seems sensible, but White has 21 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 22 ♕g4+ ♔f8 and I can exploit the pinned rook with 23 ♗f6!. White has a winning position after 23...♕xb5 24 ♕g7+ ♔e8 25 ♕g8+ ♔d7 26 ♕xf7+ ♔c6 (or 26...♔d6 27 ♖d1+) 27 ♕xe6+ ♔b7 28 ♖d1.

21 ♕b2 ♕f6

21...♖xg2+ doesn't work as after 22 ♔xg2 ♕g5+ White has 23 ♔h1, but now I calculated to the final position....

22 ♖xd7? ♕xb2?

...missing that Black can force a repetition with 22...♖xg2+!, as after 23 ♔xg2 she doesn't have to check on the g-file, as she also has 23...♕f3+ with ...♕g4+ and ...♕f3+ to follow.

23 ♗xb2 ♗c6

Now White goes into an ending a piece up.

24 ♘xa7 ♗xd7 25 ♘xc8 ♗xc8 26 ♖d1 1-0

That game demonstrated the importance of both maintaining concentration and double-checking your opponent's resources. This is a skill I admire in one of my closest friends in chess, Rhys Cumming, who had a quietly impressive tournament. His journey to the Under-2400 rating prize demonstrated a pragmatic approach to the endgame that gained him several extra half-points. In the final round of the tournament, he found himself in an ostensibly level ending against a Croatian 2200.

Notes by Rhys Cumming

R.Cumming-M.Blagojevic
Round 9

We arrive at an ending where material is level and with all the knights still on the board, there is little doubt that the objective result should be a draw. In a practical game, however, things are far from simple, especially given that here both players were down to 10 minutes plus increment for the rest of the game. This game is evidence of how difficult to defend these endings can be.

White's key advantage here is the pawn structure: Black has weak pawns on e5 and, more importantly, c5. The game is far from perfectly played, but shows the difficulty of playing these 'drawn' positions when the pressure is on, especially if the defending side becomes passive.

57 ♘b2

White starts the plan of targeting the c5-pawn. Black will be forced to either push the c-pawn or have both knights tied down to its defence.

57...♘c2+ 58 ♔f2

After other moves Black just returns to d4, attacking the f3-pawn, and White will have nothing better than bringing the king back to e3.

58...♘b4?!

Black's first inaccuracy: he will be forced into passive defence of the c-pawn. Especially when both players are short on time, it is much better to be active and force White to worry about the potential advance of the c-pawn. Indeed, 58...♘a3 feels like a better plan to me, but Black's play is still not easy: 59 ♘a4 c4 60 ♘d6 ♔e7 61 ♘f5+ ♔f6 62 ♘e3 when White has improved the position of his b7-knight and can now march the king to the queenside.

59 ♘a4 ♘a6

The only way of holding on to the pawn, but Black is now doomed to passivity and has no way of stopping the white king marching to c4.

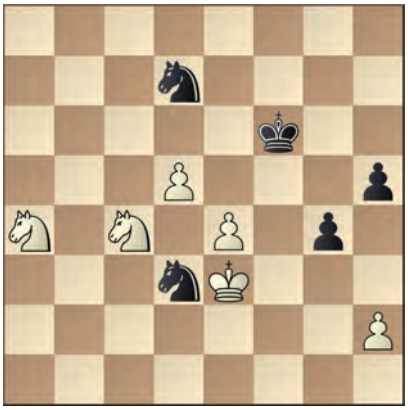
60 ♔e3 g4 61 f4?!

White should just exchange the pawns and continue his king march to c4: 61 fxg4! hxg4 62 ♔d3, and if 62...♔g5 63 ♔c4. Black has no counterplay on the kingside and with his knights so passive, he will not be able to target e4.

61...exf4+ 62 ♔xf4 c4 63 ♘d6

White still wins the c-pawn because of the tactical trick 63...♘e5? 64 ♘e8+ ♔e7 65 ♔xe5 ♔xe8 66 ♔f5. However, Black's control of the e5-square means that he should hold even after giving it up.

63...♘b4 64 ♘xc4 ♘d3+ 65 ♔e3



65...♘3e5

65...h4!? also works as if White takes the knight, he can't stop the pawn after 66 ♔xd3?? g3 67 hxg3 h3, and if 68 ♘e3 ♘e5+.

66 ♘xe5 ♔xe5?

After 66...♘xe5 67 ♘c3 h4 68 ♘e2 ♔g5 White cannot make progress as 69 ♔d4 is met by 69...♘f3+,

67 ♘b2 ♔d6 68 ♘d3?

I played this under the belief that the ending that follows in the game was winning, but closer inspection shows that Black can still hold with precise play. More accurate was 68 ♔f4 ♘e5 69 ♘d1 when Black has no constructive plan.

68...h4 69 ♔d4 g3 70 hxg3 hxg3 71 e5+ ♔e7 72 ♘f4 ♘f8 73 ♔e4 ♘d7?

The losing move as White's pawns now advance with tempo. After 73...♔d8! 74 e6 Black is able to set up a fortress with his king on c7 and knight on d6, which he manages to achieve by just one tempo: 74...♘g6 75 ♘g2 ♔c7! 76 ♔f5 ♘e7+ 77 ♔e5 ♘c8 with a cast-iron blockade.

74 d6+ ♔e8 75 e6 ♘c5 76 ♔d5 ♘d3 77 d7+ ♔d8 78 ♔d6 1-0

Overseas News

BELGIUM – The Bruges Masters confirmed itself as an ideal destination for the chess-loving tourist as it attracted 192 players from 19 different countries (11-15 August). The youngest player was Elias Ruzhansky, formerly of Richmond Junior Chess Club and currently domiciled in Ghent, who scored a most impressive 5½/9, as French GM Nikolay Legky bagged first prize with '+6'. Elsewhere in Roux, the Belgian Championship took place (27 July - 3 August). Top seed was GM Tanguy Ringoir, but he had to settle for second on tie-break to 13-year-old FM Daniel Dardha – another name to look out for.

FRANCE – As we have seen, Carl Portman enjoyed his visit to the French Championships in Chartres (18-25 August). Both the Open and Women's Championships were decided by play-offs. In the latter Pauline Guichard overcame Sophie Milliet 1½-½ at rapid, while the former went as far as blitz before Maxime Lagarde emerged victorious over Laurent Fressinet.

LATVIA – The Riga Technical University Open (5-11 August) once again attracted a sizeable British cohort. In the top section, Ravi Haria continued his fine form after hotfooting it from the British as he scored 6/9 for a 2548 performance, but that was arguably overshadowed by Peter Sowray's gain of 29 rating points for his '+2', as he narrowly missed out on an IM norm, despite defeating the teenage American GM Akshat Chandra. The grandmaster-laden Open was dominated by local GM Igor Kovalenko and by Lithuanian no.1 Sarunas Sulskis who both racked up 7½/9, while other notable achievements were the 45 rating points accrued by Hendon's Dominic Miller and, in the C tournament, the 57 gained by Samuel Gilmore of Barnet Junior Knights.

RUSSIA – Evgeny Tomashevsky won his second Russian Championship in Izhevsk (10-23 August), while Olga Girya reversed the result of last year's play-off for the Women's Championship, this time around overcoming Natalija Pogonina after an Armageddon victory. Girya and Pogonina both amassed 8/11 to finish half a point ahead of the next challenger for the Women's World Championship, Aleksandra Goryachkina. In the Open event, the technical skills of the man nicknamed 'The Professor' proved pivotal, not least as he overcame the overly-aggressive play of the pre-tournament favourite, Vladislav Artemiev. Tomashevsky finished undefeated on 7/11, half a point ahead of Nikita Vitiugov, Maxim Matlakov and Ernesto Inarkiev.

E.Tomashevsky-V.Artemiev
Russian Championship, Izhevsk 2019

Black has been outplayed and has just gobbled a pawn on b3. Can you see why he shouldn't have?

28 ♗xe4!

Overloading the black pieces. Remarkably 28 ♖d7! ♘e2+ 29 ♔h2 ♗xb2 30 ♗xe4! also works.

28...♗f6?

Black is also highly unlikely to survive even after 28...♖bd8 29 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 30 ♕c7 ♗f6 31 ♗xc3 ♕xc3 32 b6.

29 ♗d5+! ♘xd5 30 ♗xf6 ♕xd1+ 31 ♖xd1 ♘xf6 32 ♖d6 ♖e1+ 33 ♔g2 ♖f8 34 ♕xa5 ♖e2 35 ♖d2 ♖e5 36 ♖d8 1-0

As we went to press, the second round of the World Cup, FIDE's gigantic 128-player knock-out, had just concluded in Khanty-Mansiysk. The biggest early shocks were the 2-0 elimination of the 16th seed Radoslaw Wojtaszek by 21-year-old Norwegian Johan-Sebastian Christiansen and Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu knocking out Hikaru Nakamura. We should also mention the continued rise of Alireza Firouzja as the 16-year-old reached the third round by defeating Daniil Dubov.

Unfortunately no British players made it to round 3. After seven draws in the opening round, Michael Adams was painfully eliminated in a second blitz game by 19-year-old Indian GM Aravindh Chithambaram. Gawain Jones and Luke McShane both defeated South American opposition to reach round 2, but were then eliminated come the tie-breaks, Jones went out in the rapid to Dmitry Jakovenko, while McShane suffered at blitz against Dmitry Yuffa.

SPAIN – Last year Sestao won the Spanish Team Championship; this year they were in the second division at their sponsor's request. Despite a reduced budget, Gawain Jones still appeared and led from the front in Linares (19-23 August), as his 5½/7 on top board helped his side to another title.

SWEDEN – Lund hosted the 5th CellaVison Cup (2-4 August), a strong weekend Open which once again proved popular, in part due to the unique format: the Friday evening sees four rounds of rapid chess, after which the Saturday and Sunday each feature the classic two normal length games. Defending champion Alexei Shirov, who is back playing under the Spanish flag, was pushed all the way, but prevailed on tie-break over Russian GM Dmitry Kryakvin and the hero of this year's Aeroflot Open, the long-time Estonian no.1 Kaido Kulaots, after the trio had all finished unbeaten on 7/8.

UAE – His rating might have dropped below 2600, but Baadur Jobava bounced back to form by racking up 8/9 to win a strong version of the Abu Dhabi Masters (2-10 August). He finished a whole point ahead of the Uzbek teenager Nodirbek Yakubboev, who, along with Ni Hua, managed to take half a point off the Georgian meteorite, as Jobava's victims included Mateusz Bartel and Parham Maghsoodloo.

USA – The top four American players received some further practice at the Saint Louis Chess Club as they took part in the Champions Challenge (2-5 September). At the start of each day a Chess960 position was randomly selected after which the eight players had an hour to study it ahead of playing two rapid and two blitz games, with just eight blitz encounters on the final day. Most eyes were on the clash between Fabiano Caruana and a certain Garry Kasparov, who had once again been lured out of retirement by leading chess philanthropist Rex Sinquefield.

There wasn't a huge amount to choose between the players, but Caruana had wrapped up the match with a day to spare and would eventually triumph by a whopping 19-7, largely thanks to much better clock management and defensive skills, while the 56-year-old legend made matters worse for himself with a number of blunders. Elsewhere Hikaru Nakamura did very well to turn an atrocious ½-7½ start into a 14½-11½ victory over Levon Aronian, while Wesley So outclassed Veselin Topalov to triumph 18-8 and Peter Svidler defeated Leinier Dominguez Perez 15½-10½

Home News

UK - The first two weekends of September saw 8 qualifying tournaments take place for the UK Open Blitz Championship. Many IMs and three GMs took part, possibly lured by the opportunity to win the £1,000 first prize in Solihull on Saturday, November 16th.

Jonathan Pein (Durham) travelled over to **Belfast** and qualified on 13/15 along with Steve Rush (Queen's University), while in **Birmingham** Ameet Ghasi (Sutton Coldfield) amassed a perfect score, with Jonah Willow (Nottingham) also qualifying, albeit back on 12½/15. In **Bristol** the two competing grandmasters both qualified, Matthew Turner (Glastonbury) racking up 13½/15, while Keith Arkell (Paignton) also went through on 12, despite a last-round defeat at the hands of our Executive Editor. That may explain why Bristol blitz expert James Sherwin headed west and qualified in **Cardiff** on 13½/15, despite finishing half a point behind fellow, and local, IM Jose Camacho Collados, with one of the stars of last year's Blitz Final, Marcus Harvey, only able to finish third.

Justin Tan may now be living in Amsterdam, but returned to **Edinburgh** to qualify from the Scottish capital along with Andrew Greet (Bearsden) on 13/15. Perhaps surprisingly, the **London** qualifier didn't attract a single grandmaster, but was still pretty strong with John-Paul Wallace (Athenaeum) finished first on just 12/15. Fellow IM Thomas Rendle (Hammersmith) was half a point behind and also progressed, with Ravia Haria, David Haydon and Peter Roberson narrowly missing out. James Adair (Stamford Bridge) emerged triumphant with 13/15 in **Bolton**, where we were delighted to see former England captain Allan Beardsworth (Stockport) qualifying, after edging out Andrew Horton (3Cs) on tie-break. A stronger qualifier was **Newcastle**, where blitz expert Charlie Storey could only finish on '+3'. Danny Gormally (Alnwick) was in excellent form, drawing only with Yichen Han, with Lorin D'Costa (Hendon) finishing second on 13/15.

BELFAST - 16-year-old Daniil Zelenchuk (Strand) won his first Ulster Championship as he racked up 5/6 to see off Jacob Flynn by half a point at the Europa Hotel (24-26 August). Conor Spackman (BBC) won the Intermediate with 5½/6, while Colm Hawkins (Australia) edged out Adrian Dornford-Smith (Strand) on tie-break in the Junior.

BRIDGEND - Matthew Turner (Glastonbury) triumphed at the 1st Welsh Masters in Bridgend (26-30 August). Both the Scottish Champion and Keith Arkell (Paignton) remained unbeaten, but Turner made '+6' to Arkell's '+5' in this 10 player all-play-all. Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow continues to impress and was only defeated by Turner as he finished half a point shy of a norm on 6½/9, with Jack Rudd (Barnstaple) back on 6.

Bristol Grammar School hosted one of the eight qualifiers for the final of the UK Open Blitz Championship. Nearest the camera is Malcolm and Matthew Turner can be seen in the distance.

CROWBOROUGH - David Norton (Horley) amassed 5½/6 to win the Berberich Cup and £150 at the Crowborough Rapidplay on September 14th. Also unbeaten was David Graham (Worthing), who was half a point behind, with Ian Snape (Beckenham), Chaski Patrick (Uckfield), and John Sugden (Hastings) a further half-point in arrears. Run on the continental model, the tournament featured just one section, with seven grading prizes of £40 awarded, while Worthing won the team award.

MANCHESTER - Joseph McPhillips scooped the £600 first prize at the Manchester Summer Congress, defeating in the final round China's Ran Song who had earlier overcome GM Stephen Gordon.
Open: 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 4½/5, 2-4 Brandon Clarke (Wood Green), Nigel Davies (Southport), Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4.
Major: 1-3 Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking), Mike Fisher (Oldham), Robert Dean (Pudsey) 4½.
Knights: 1 Aisha Benhamida (Tameside) 4½, 2-4 Tomas Adamski (Rolls Royce, Derby), Ariana Escobar (Congleton), Carl Stephens (Darlington) 4.

SHEFFIELD - Seniors dominated the Open section at the Darnall and Handsworth Rapid-play, filling the top four spots on August 31st.
Open: 1-2 Mike Surtees (Great Lever), Jim Burnett (Doncaster) 4½/6, 3-4 Chris Shephard (Sheffield), Paul Hutchinson (Scunthorpe) 4.
Major: 1-3 Robert Starley (Leeds), Jeremy Hamm (Sheffield), Andrew Stoker (Stockport) 5.
Intermediate: 1 Daniel Hill (Hull) 5½, 2 Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 3-4 Nathaniel Holroyd-Doveton (Rotherham), Ned Carmichael (Beverley) 4½.
Minor: 1-2 Aisha Benhamida (Tameside), John Light (Limewood) 5, 3 Paul Leonard (South Manchester) 4½.

England junior Elias Ruzhansky receives his prize in Ghent, where the youngest player in the field did very well, as we saw on p.51.

Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 26-28)

1) Leko-Bogner
1 ♕xg7+! 1-0 1...♔xg7 2 ♗c3+ and 3 ♖xa2 leaves White a piece to the good.

2) McNab-McClement
1 ♗xf6! (1 ♖cd1 also works, threatening 2 ♗xf6, and if 1...♖f8 2 ♖xc7 ♕xc7 3 ♖d7) **1...♗xf6 2 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 3 ♕f7# 1-0**

3) Bajarani-Javanbakht
1 g8♕+! 1-0 1...♔xg8 2 ♔g6 ♔h8 3 ♔f7 avoids the stalemate tricks and forces promotion.

4) Caruana-Nakamura
1 ♖xe5! ♕xd3 (if 1...♖xe5 2 ♕xd8+) **2 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 3 ♖xd3** picked up a piece.

5) Rushbrooke-Ifalore
1...♕e2! (undermining White's defence of the back rank; 1...♗f2 2 ♖c1 ♕e2 also wins) **2 ♗g3 ♖d1 3 ♕xb6 ♖xe1+ 4 ♗xe1 cxb6 0-1**

6) Anand-Dubov
1...♗e5! (overloading the queen in view of 2 ♕xe5 ♕xg2#) **2 ♕g5 ♗f4! 0-1**

7) Menadue-Garnett
1 ♗xh7+! ♔f8 (1...♘xh7 2 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 3 ♘xe6 wins the black queen) **2 ♗g6! ♕b6 3 ♗xf7** destroyed the black king's pawn cover to give White a decisive attack.

8) Arakhamia-Grant - Green
1 ♘xf6+! (1 ♘xe7+! ♕xe7 2 ♖xd3 also wins) **1...exf6 2 ♖xe6 ♖xd1+ 3 ♖xd1 ♖c3 4 ♖xf6 ♗e7 5 ♖f3 1-0**

9) Roselli Mailhe-Perez Ponsa
1...♖f7! 0-1 1...♖d8 also works. After 1...♖f7 there's no good defence, as if 2 ♖f1 g3 or 2 ♘xf7 ♕f2.

10) Caruana-Grischuk
1...♘f3+! 2 gxf3 gxf3 (2...♖h7 3 ♕g2 gxf3 is even more clinical) **3 ♖fb1** (3 ♕d6 ♖g6+ forces the queen back) **3...♖g7 4 ♕xg7+ ♕xg7+ 5 ♔f1 ♖h6 6 ♔e1 ♕xc3+ 0-1**

11) Kramnik-Svidler
1 ♗xh5! gxh5? (1...♕d6 would have fought on, albeit an exchange and pawn down) **2 ♕xh5+ ♔g8 3 ♕g6+ ♔h8 4 ♖f7 1-0**

12) Gheorghiu-Mcgregor
1 ♘xd5! cxd5 (if 1...♘xd5 2 ♕h7+ ♔f8 3 ♕h8#, and 1...♕d8 2 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 3 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 4 ♕h7+ ♔f8 5 e4 is also very promising for White) **2 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 3 ♗f4** won material.

13) Shankland-Maghsoodloo
1 ♗xb5+! ♖xb5 2 ♖xd8+! (the knight will be able to escape from the corner, leaving White two pawns up) **2...♔xd8 3 ♘xf7+ ♔e7 4 ♘xh8 g5 5 ♘g6+ ♔f7 6 ♘e5+ ♔g7 7 c4 1-0**

14) Hilton-Taylor
1...♘xd4! (1...♘b4! also does the trick) **2 ♗xd4 ♗xc2 3 ♗b5+** (or 3 ♕c1 ♗e4 when 4 ♘xe4 ♖xc1+ 5 ♖xc1 dxe4 doesn't give White enough for the queen) **3...axb5 4 ♕e2 0-0 5 ♕xb5 ♕c7** left Black a pawn ahead and with a totally dominant position.

15) Ali Marandi-Ozer
1 ♖e5! 1-0 Black can only prevent mate on c5 by ditching his knight.

16) Huzman-Gorshtein
1 ♘xd5! ♖c8 (1...♘xd5 2 ♕xe4+ regains the piece with some interest) **2 ♗xf6! 1-0** 2 ♕b1? could now be met by 2...♘xd5 3 ♕xe4+ ♘e7, but after 2 ♗xf6 (2 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 3 ♗xf6 ♖xc2 4 ♗xd8 ♔xd8 5 ♗xe4 isn't quite so effective in view of the opposite-coloured bishops) 2...♖xc2 3 ♗xd8 ♔xd8 4 ♗xe4 White is two pawns ahead.

17) Dubov-Anand
1 d8♕+! (underpromoting also works) **1...♗xd8 2 ♔xh6 ♔f7 3 g5** (White's connected passed pawns easily trump the lone pawn on a2) **3...♗e7 4 ♗c3 ♔g8 5 ♔g6 ♗f8 1-0** 6 h6 is simple, as is 5...♗b4 6 ♗a1 and then 7 h6.

18) Svetushkin-Gorodetzky
1 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 2 ♕xe6 ♖cc7 (there's simply no defence, as shown too by 2...♖xc3 3 ♕xf7 ♖c4 4 e6+ ♖xd4 5 e7) **3 ♕g4** (3 ♕d6! would have won on the spot) **3...♖xc3 4 e6+ ♖f6 5 ♗xc3 h6 6 ♕d4 ♔g7 7 ♕e5!** (the pin must be maintained; White is fortunate he can still draw after 7 ♕xf6+? ♕xf6 8 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6) **7...♕b6+ 8 ♔g2 ♕f2+ 9 ♔h3 ♕f1+ 10 ♔h4 1-0**

19) Svidler-Grischuk
1...♘g4! (much stronger and more forcing than 1...♕f4 and 1...♕h4) **2 ♖f1** (2 fxg4 ♕xf2+ 3 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 4 ♔g1 ♗h4! leads to mate) **2...♘xh2!** (2...♖xf3 also works) **3 ♔xh2 ♕h4+ 4 ♔g2 ♕g5+ 5 ♔h1 ♖f4 6 ♕e8+ ♗f8 0-1**

20) Rapport-Dominguez Perez
1...♗a6! 0-1 Taking control of d3 is well worth a rook. White's idea was 1...♖xe2? 2 ♕g8+! ♔xg8 3 d8♕+ ♔h7 4 ♕d3+ ♗f5 5 ♕xe2, but after 1...♗a6 there's simply no defence, in view of 2 ♕xa8 ♖xe2, forcing mate.

21) Murphy-O'Donnell
1...♖fg7! (1...♖xg3 2 ♖xd8+ ♔g7 3 ♖xg3+ ♕xg3+ 4 ♔h1 only gives Black a draw, at least so long as White finds 4...♖xf3 5 ♕b7+! ♖f7 6 ♕g2, while the game saw a sudden turnaround: 1...♖h7?? 2 ♗xe5+! dxe5 3 ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 and now the fastest mate was 4 ♕g6+) **2 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 3 ♖h2 ♖xg3+ 4 ♔h1 ♖dg8!** (more aesthetic and stronger than the also decisive 4...♕xh2+ 5 ♔xh2 ♖g7) **5 ♕e1** (if 5 ♖xh3+ ♖xh3#) **5...♕xh2+ 6 ♔xh2 ♖3g7** and 9...♖h7+ will clean White up, as pointed out by Sam Collins in his ChessPublishing column.

22) He-Mikhalevski
1...♘f4! (this requires careful calculation, but otherwise White obtains serious counterplay after 2 ♘c3) **2 ♘xf4+** (2 ♔d4 ♘xg2 3 ♔c5 f5 4 ♔xb5 h5 5 ♔xa4 g4 6 fxg4 fxg4 7 hxg4 h4! wins) **2...gxf4+ 3 ♔d4** (3 ♔xf4 runs into the thematic 3...b4!, and if 4 axb4 c3 5 bxc3 a3) **3...♔g5 4 ♔c5 ♔h4 5 ♔xb5 ♔g3 6 ♔xa4 ♔xg2 7 ♔b4 ♔xf3 8 a4 ♔g3 9 a5 f3 10 a6 f2 11 a7 f1♕ 12 a8♕ f5!** and at the end of the race, Black has a winning queen endgame: **13 ♕c6 ♕e1+ 14 ♔b5 ♕e5+ 15 ♔a6 f4 16 ♕xc4 ♕f6+ 17 ♔a5 f3 18 ♕c7+ ♕f4 19 ♕c3 ♔h4 20 ♕e1+ f2 21 ♕f1 ♔g3 22 h4 ♕e4 23 b4 h5 24 ♔a4 ♕a8+ 25 ♔b5 ♕g2 26 ♕d3+ ♔h2 27 ♕d6+ ♔h1 0-1**

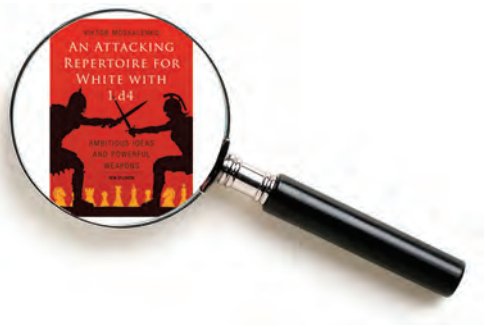
23) Radovanovic-Wei Yi
1...b5! (a key space-gainer, since 1...♖xg2+? 2 ♔xg2 ♔g7 only draws, as shown by 3 ♔f3 ♔f6 4 ♔e4 ♔e6 5 a4! h3 6 d5+ ♔d6 7 ♔d4 a6 8 ♔c4 ♔e5!? 9 a5! bxa5 10 ♔c5 a4 11 d6 ♔e6 12 ♔c6 a3 13 d7 a2 14 d8♕ a1♕ 15 ♕c8+, as pointed out by John Emms in his ChessPublishing column) **2 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 3 ♔g2 a5 4 ♔f3 a4! 0-1** Remaining precise to the end, rather than blunder into a draw with 4...b4?? 5 axb4 a4 6 b5. The winning idea is 4...a4 5 ♔e3 b4!, and if 6 ♔d2 b3 7 h3 ♔f7 8 ♔d3 ♔e6 9 ♔d2 ♔d5 10 ♔d3 b2! 11 ♔c2 ♔xd4 12 ♔xb2 ♔d3 followed by picking off a3 then h3.

Instead, 2 d5! would have been much more complicated, but here too Black is winning after 2...h3!, as shown by Emms: 3 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 4 ♔f2 ♔f7 5 ♔e3 ♔e7 6 ♔d3 ♔d6 7 ♔d4 a6! (a case of reciprocal zugzwang; 7...a5? 8 ♔e4 b4 9 axb4 axb4 10 ♔d4 b3 11 ♔c3 ♔xd5 12 ♔xb3 ♔e4 is only a draw) 8 ♔e4 a5 9 ♔d4 a4! 10 ♔e4 b4; or 3 ♕g3!? ♖xg3+ 4 hxg3 ♔g7 5 g4 ♔f6! (Black must head towards the pawns; White even wins after 5...a5? 6 d6 ♔f8 7 g5 b4 8 axb4 axb4 9 g6 b3 10 d7 ♔e7 11 g7 b2 12 d8♕+!) 6 ♔h2 a5 7 ♔xh3 b4 8 axb4 axb4 and Black wins by a tempo, in view of 9 ♔h4 b3 10 g5+ ♔e5 11 g6 b2 12 g7 b1♕ 13 g8♕ ♕h1+ 14 ♔g5 ♕g1+.

24) Svane-Berg
1 ♘xe6!! (in the game White presumably didn't trust the sacrifice or couldn't calculate far enough as he preferred 1 ♕e2) **1...fxe6 2 ♖xe6+ ♔f7** (2...♗e7 3 ♗xf6 gxf6 4 ♕h5+ ♔d8 5 ♗f5 or here 4...♔f8 5 ♕h6+ ♔f7 6 ♖ae1 ♖ae8 7 ♗xh7 is even worse for Black) **3 ♕e2** (calmly preparing to treble on

the e-file; the more brutal 3 ♖xf6+!? gxf6 4 ♕h5+ ♔g7 5 ♖e1 also does the business) **3...♗d5** (perhaps remarkably, there's simply no defence for Black, shown too by 3...b5 4 ♖e1 ♔g8 5 ♗xf6 gxf6 6 ♖xf6, as given by John Watson, and 3...♘d5 4 ♖e1 ♔g8 5 ♗c4 h6 6 ♗e7) **4 ♖xf6+! gxf6 5 ♕h5+ ♔e7** (or 5...♔g8 6 ♗xf6 ♗e6 7 ♖e1, and if 7...♕f7 8 ♕g5+ ♗g7 9 ♖xe6) **6 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6 7 ♕f5+! ♔e7** (7...♔g7 8 ♕g5+ ♔f7 9 ♕xd5+ ♔g7 10 ♕d4+! ♔f7 11 ♗c4+ is crushing) **8 ♕xd5** leaves Black a rook ahead, but completely undone by his exposed king: for example, **8...♖d8** (8...♗h6 9 ♖e1+ ♔f6 10 ♕d4+ is again fatal) **9 ♖e1+ ♔f6 10 ♕e6+ ♔g7 11 ♕g4+ ♔f7 12 ♗c4+ ♔f6 13 ♖e6+ ♔f7 14 ♕h5+ ♔g7 15 ♕g5+ ♔f7 16 ♖e7#**

This Month's New Releases



An Attacking Repertoire for White with 1 d4
Viktor Moskalenko, 368 pages
New in Chess
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Moskalenko has returned with another inspirational book full of interesting ideas in the openings. This time, instead of choosing one opening from Black's point of view, as he has formerly done with the French, Dutch, Pirc and Budapest Gambit, he is offering a 1 d4 repertoire for White replete with "Ambitious ideas and powerful weapons."

In fact it has to be said this is not a full repertoire. Anyone looking for something to combat the Dutch will only find a referral to *The Diamond Dutch* (Moskalenko, New in Chess 2014). It would have been better to offer a couple of new Dutch games alongside the referral, just to give some starting ideas for White.

Similarly, there is no coverage of the 1...d6/1...g6 family of openings, which don't always transpose into the main lines, and neither will the reader find anything on the Tarrasch Defence to the Queen's Gambit or the Budapest Gambit. This is a flaw in the book which should have been picked up and corrected, or at least the word 'repertoire' should have been avoided.

What we do have against everything else is a series of aggressive and sometimes offbeat lines, aimed at putting each of Black's defences under pressure right from the start. We have, for example, the Four Pawns Attack against the King's Indian Defence, the Taimanov variation with 8 ♗b5+ against the Modern Benoni, the Sämisch against the Nimzo-Indian, and the Exchange variation against both the Slav and the Queen's Gambit Declined.

More obscure are 4 ♕c2 against the Benko/Volga Gambit and 5 ♗d2 against the Grünfeld. These two lines will definitely be of use against unsuspecting club players, who have crammed in the finer details of the main lines, but may struggle against the unexpected nuances of the rarer ones.

Black's problems when facing **1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 ♗d2 ♗g7 6 e4 ♘xc3 7 ♗xc3** can become more apparent when he achieves his usual goal of melting the a1-h8 diagonal; the dark-squared bishops can easily be exchanged and Black's king will be weakened as a result. This is in stark contrast to the usual scenario, in which Black's king's bishop is a menace throughout the game. Creative play is the order of the day and Grünfeld aficionados will no longer be able to rely simply on the long main lines they have somehow memorised.

V.Anand-J.L.Hammer
Stavanger 2013

It is clear to see Black's king has been weakened on the dark squares. Anand now played a novelty, in place of the known and perfectly valid 13 h5. He sacrificed material with **13 ♘h3!? ♕xh4 14 0-0-0 ♕xe4**. Now, according to Moskalenko, 15 ♘g5 was the best way to proceed, instead of Anand's looser **15 ♗d3?!** which allowed Hammer to pick up another pawn and worry the white king with **15...♕a4 16 ♘g5 ♕xa2.** Anand still went on to win (1-0, 43), but it was messy.

The layout is good and clear, the prose explanations are motivational and the lines of analysis are kept comparatively light. In short, apart from the omissions, this is definitely up to Moskalenko's previous standards and it will be fully accessible to club players – although further reading will definitely be required.

Sean Marsh

The Nemesis: Geller's Greatest Games
Efim Geller, 480 pages
Quality Chess
RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

This very substantial tome is a translation by John Sugden of a collection of the games of Efim Geller (1925-1998), first published in Russian. It is magnificent. The games are all annotated by Geller himself. The annotations were gathered by IM Maxim Notkin, who adds corrections to Geller's notes throughout.

Geller can stake a reasonable claim to the status of strongest non-world champion in history. The title, *The Nemesis*, reflects his monstrous record against world champions (summarised in a table on p.477), which includes plus-scores against Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian and Fischer. Some crushing victories against such players appear in this book. Only Spassky succeeded in dominating him.

Geller was an exceptionally deep analyst and researcher, a pioneer in openings such as the King's Indian, the Sicilian, and the white side of the Ruy Lopez, and took a very concrete approach to chess. He is certainly one of the very best and most instructive annotators in history, too.

He carefully balances concise explanations of plans, key moments and sometimes psychology with essential lines. For the most part, the latter are not overwhelmingly dense, though occasionally Geller takes flight into complex trees of variations, as in the two-page analysis of the critical position in his demolition of Fischer with Black in the Najdorf Poisoned Pawn (Monte Carlo 1967, pp.225-6). Jacob Aagaard concludes fittingly in his introduction: "For those that want to understand chess on a deep level, there is much wisdom here – and many chances to go deeper" (p.19). The book is both delightful and of permanent value.

Notkin's computer-assisted insertions are

exemplary. They are concise, avoiding unnecessary intrusion into Geller's text. The use of italics makes it immediately clear where Geller ends and Notkin begins. In general, it is remarkable how well Geller's analysis stands up to the unforgiving scrutiny of modern computer engines. Notkin's conscientiousness is also testified by a note in which he refutes an attempted improvement by Kasparov, vindicating the narrative that Geller provides of his win with Black against Botvinnik in 1952 (p.42). Notkin has chosen quite rightly to present the games chronologically – the first is from 1949, the last from 1990. An earlier Geller collection, austerely titled *The Application of Chess Theory* (1984), grouped the games by opening. Any reader who wishes to reproduce this effect using *The Nemesis* can do so by using the Index of Openings.

There is a great deal in this book: 131 games plus a further four fragments; a rich introduction by Jacob Aagaard, which discusses a few more games; a table of tournament results, and good indices. What does not appear in the book is also noteworthy, however. First, there is no biography of the grandmaster from Odessa here: for personal information beyond the nice anecdotes supplied by Aagaard (pp.10-11), the English-language reader must turn to Genna Sosonko's brief memoir in his *Russian Silhouettes* (2009), and to Bernard Cafferty's out-of-print translation of Geller's 1962 autobiography, *Grandmaster Geller at the Chessboard*.

Sosonko describes Geller vividly: "A man of few words, with a characteristic facial expression, frequent rocking of the head, accompanied by a sceptical raising of the eyebrows, his checked jacket, which he carefully hung on the back of his chair, and the ashtray, full of cigarette-ends, always alongside him." He had "A dimpled chin and a slow waddle", and looked like a boxer (Sosonko, p.70).

Second, the claim that *The Nemesis* gathers "All Efim Geller's annotations of his own games" (p.7), his "complete works" (p.8), is incorrect. As a subsequent Quality Chess blog post has made clear, a handful of games from *The Application of Chess Theory* do not appear in the present book. Geller annotated many games for the languageless *Chess Informant* series, also omitted from *The Nemesis*. It would be understandable if permission could not be gained to reproduce the latter notes, but the fact that these omissions go unrecorded is curious. Notkin instead gleaned material from "The periodical press from the 1970s to the 90s" (p.8): nothing further is disclosed. Specialist researchers may be disappointed by the absence of a list of sources, which would hardly have cluttered the text unduly. That said, *The Nemesis* is a great deal longer than *The Application of Chess Theory*.

Anyone who plays through his best games is bound to wonder: what prevented Geller from climbing to the very top? A key part of the answer appears in the title of game 14, 'The horrors of time trouble' (p.60). Although his pre-game preparation often focused on a particular opponent's strengths and weaknesses, at the board Geller took the purist motto to play the position rather than the opponent to an extreme. He would consume swathes of time in seeking the truth about a position.

It is often reasonable to assume that a time-trouble addicted perfectionist suffers from an underlying self-doubt. Geller's case seems to have been more extreme than that, sometimes amounting to a self-destructive impracticality. Admittedly his time consumption was often rewarded. In one case, Geller recounts, "By spending a total of nearly one hour on his 8th and 9th moves, Black found a new and interesting plan which was later accepted by theory as the main continuation" (p.346). But, in a Candidates match against Portisch (Game 2, Portoroz 1973), a pawn up in a simple, drawn endgame, Geller lost on time on move 87, staring at the board rather than make a random move to reach the time control on move 88 (according to Robert Byrne's column in the *New York Times*, 21 October 1973). Aagaard presents an only slightly less drastic catastrophe against Korchnoi from their 1971 match (p.16), in which Geller agreed a draw in a won position due to time shortage.

In his obituary of Geller (*The Independent*, 25 November 1998), Bill Hartston offers another theory. Geller did analytical work for Spassky, Karpov and later Kasparov, among many others. "Perhaps if he had been a little more personally ambitious, and less willing to share his discoveries with colleagues, he might have scaled the game's highest summit." Further, it may be that Geller took a little too long to develop a perfectly all-round style. Writing about the young Geller in 1961, Alexander Kotov stated that although a fine attacker, he was "Weaker in positional battles and complicated endgames" that demanded a methodical, logical approach (*Soviet School of Chess*, p.198).

Any such weakness was strictly relative, of course, and Geller remained a formidable competitor for a long period. In 1979 he won the USSR Championship at his twentieth attempt, brushing aside Beliavsky with Black in one of the games given here (pp.387-9). Geller was self-aware about the evolution of his style with age. Commenting on this position (p.42)....

M.Botvinnik-E.Geller
Budapest 1952

...He provides a revealing insight about his choice of **25...♖ae8**: "The most purposeful move. Today I might have given some thought to the fate of the bishop on f5 and tried to rescue it with 25...♖d7, securing the d3-square. This doesn't imply any change in the assessment of the position. It merely speaks of the metamorphosis that every chessplayer inescapably undergoes; it speaks (alas!) of the emergence of prejudices." At least by the usual standard of Soviet-era commentators, Geller is witty and warm.

By way of strongly recommending *The Nemesis*, it seems fitting to conclude this review with a sample of Geller's play. Rather than give a spoiler, here is one of my favourites from his twilight years, which does not appear in the book.

E.Geller-J.Hickl
Dortmund 1989
Modern Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 ♘c3 d6 4 g3 ♘c6 5 ♗e3 e5 6 dxe5 ♘xe5 7 h3 ♘f6 8 f4 ♘ed7 9 ♗g2 0-0 10 ♘ge2 ♖e8 11 0-0 ♘b6

12 ♗d4!

The inexorable quality of this game seems to originate here. The most obvious move is 12 ♕d3, developing, controlling c4 and defending the e4-pawn, as well as the loose bishop on e3. However, after 12...c6 13 ♖ad1 d5 (C.Murphy-J.Vakhidov, Hastings 2017/18), Black's position is pleasant because 14 e5 is met by 14...♗f5, and the queen is beaten back. Geller's choice leaves Black without an obvious plan, and he proceeds to overprotect the e4-pawn, gain space, and exploit the bishop-pair.

12...♗e6?! 13 b3 c5 14 ♗f2 ♕e7

The consistent, but over-sharp 14...d5 also led to an edge for White after 15 f5 gxf5 16 exf5 ♗xf5 17 ♗xc5 in J.Magem Badals-M.Todorcevic, Las Palmas 1993.

15 g4 ♗d7 16 ♕d2 ♗c6 17 ♘g3 ♖ad8 18 ♖ae1 ♕c7 19 g5 ♘fd7 20 ♘d5 ♗xd5 21 exd5 ♘c8 22 c4 a6 23 h4 b5 24 ♗h3 ♘cb6 25 ♕c2 bxc4 26 bxc4 ♘f8 27 h5 ♖b8 28 hxg6 hxg6 29 f5 ♖xe1 30 ♖xe1 ♗e5 31 ♘e4 ♘bd7 32 ♕e2 ♖b2 33 ♕g4 ♕a5 34 fxg6 fxg6 35 ♕h4 ♖xf2 36 ♔xf2 ♕xa2+ 37 ♖e2 ♗d4+ 38 ♔f1 ♕xc4 39 ♗e6+ ♘xe6 40 dxe6 ♕c1+ 41 ♖e1

♕c4+ 42 ♔g2 ♕a2+ 43 ♔h1 ♘f8 44 e7 1-0

Geller said: "If I feel anxious or uncomfortable, I sit down at the chessboard for some 5-6 hours and gradually come to" (Sosonko, p.73). Try it – with this wonderful hardback.

James Vigus

A Complete Guide to Practical Play
John Emms & Volker Schlepütz,
496 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Everyman Chess continue to produce compilation books and while some contain works which are undoubtedly now a little dated, this latest one is most welcome to see. It features Emms' *The Survival Guide to Competitive Chess*, which was one of his very best books and still contains much material of use to the over-the-board player, as well as *The Chess Tactics Detection Workbook* by Emms and Schlepütz. That remains a fairly unique project, with the reader being forced to go through games, aiming to pinpoint which moves were mistakes.

Also recently released is *A Complete Guide to Systems Where Black Meets 1 e4 by Supporting a Pawn on d5*, featuring both *Starting Out: The Caro-Kann* by Joe Gallagher and Byron Jacobs' *Starting Out: The French*, which runs to 368 pages in total, while retailing at £17.99 or £16.19 for Subscribers.

Attack and Counterattack in Chess
Fred Reinfeld, 88 pages, paperback
RRP £12.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.65**

Russell Enterprises continue to reproduce some of Fred Reinfeld's classic works. This one is split into two halves, beginning by showing how White exploits an early initiative and takes advantage of typical mistakes by Black, before demonstrating how Black might neutralise White's early initiative and even aim to take over himself. The book may have first appeared in 1958, but almost all the examples are still relevant today and of a type regularly seen at club level, where many a player continues, for example, to struggle to handle an early gambit from White.

Chess Tactics Workbook for Kids
John Nunn, 128 pages, hardback
RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

The leading chess author's latest work has a similar cover to Murray Chandler bestselling *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess*. The premise isn't dissimilar, if pitched at a higher level. Nunn knows that the quickest way for those new to the game to improve is by expanding their tactical repertoire. He presents 12 chapters, each devoted to an important tactical theme, such as forks, discovered attacks and in-between moves. In each chapter the key motif is clearly introduced before the reader has 18 positions to solve, with the work concluding with an additional chapter of puzzles entitled 'Test Papers'. As well as those new to the game, the weaker club player and keen junior should also learn a lot from going through this latest book from Gambit.

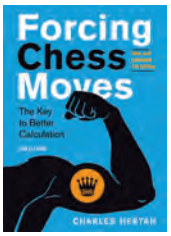
Also due out soon from Gambit Publications is *Chess Logic in Practice*, the follow-up to Erik Kislik's *Applying Logic in Chess*.

ChessBase Magazine 191
ChessBase PC-DVD
RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest issue of *CBM* is for 'September/October 2019' and covers the GCT event in Zagreb, as well as the likes of Biel and Dortmund. Anish Giri explains how he overcame Ian Nepomniachtchi in the Croatian capital, with Wesley So, Baskaran Adhiban and Vidit Gujrathi other notable contributors. Elsewhere Simon Williams looks at 1 b3 e5 2 ♗b2 e4!? and Najdorf aficionados may not want to miss Daniel King on 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 ♗e7 8 ♕f3 h6!? 9 ♗h4 g5 10 fxg5 ♘fd7, the infamous Gothenburg variation.

Coaching Kasparov Volume 1: The Whizz Kid (1973-1981)
Alexander Nikitin, 200 pages, paperback
RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

Elk & Ruby are to be commended for bringing to light much which has remained in a dim shade in the west concerning the legendary Soviet chess scene. Here Kasparov's early trainer reveals just how they worked together, while annotating 46 of the future world champion's games from those early years (Kasparov turned 18 in 1981), including all 14 of a previously unpublished blitz match between Kasparov and Tal.

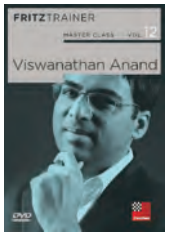


Forcing Chess Moves
Charles Hertan, 432 pages, paperback
RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.35**

Remarkably this is already the fourth edition of Hertan's modern classic based on the principle that humans miss many possibilities by not examining forcing moves first in a position. The book will undoubtedly improve your calculation and chess vision, with this expanded new edition adding 50 pages of new and instructive combinations.

Greatest 460 Puzzles Part 1: From Practical Games of 2019
Csaba Balogh, 216 pages, paperback
RRP £19.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.95**

The latest puzzle book from Chess Evolution does just what its says on the tin. Inside one will find 460 positions – some beautiful, others simply neat – taken from games played in the first half of this year and divided into easy, medium and hard categories.



Master Class Volume 12 – Viswanathan Anand
ChessBase PC-DVD; running time: 7 hours
RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

There can be little doubt that Yannick Pelletier, Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller and Oliver Reeh present a quality line-up and here those four ChessBase presenters team up to examine the chess of a living legend. Anand is famous for his deep understanding of the game and the way in which he can quickly come to grips with a new position, rarely missing tactical resources which may arise. All aspects of his game are examined on this DVD, from his opening repertoire to those endgames he especially excels in, with the viewer also having the bonus of 399 tactical exercises to solve.

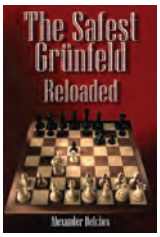
Side-Stepping Mainline Theory
Gerard Welling & Steve Giddins,
272 pages, paperback
RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

What percentage of the club player's study time did Emanuel Lasker advise should be devoted to the study of the openings and how long do you actually spend? The answer to the first part of that is just 5%. Of course, theory has evolved somewhat in the last hundred years, but the highly-experienced duo of Giddins and Welling are firmly of the belief that the modern club player spends far too long studying openings. Their advice: the club player should be happy to emerge from the opening with a reasonable position. Their proposed repertoire: the Hanham Philidor and Old Indian as Black and, as White, the same set-up in reverse. The result: the authors map out the main lines well, highlight the few precise sequences the reader simply must know, and especially demonstrate exactly

what to aim for in the typical middlegames which arise. You may not win many games quickly with this repertoire, but you also won't be in major trouble by move 10 with it.

The Nasty Nimzowitsch Defence
Christian Bauer; PC-DVD;
running time: 3 hours, 44 minutes
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The French Grandmaster is making a deserved name for himself as a leading authority on a number of offbeat openings and all the while as he maintains a rating over 2600. Bauer returns to the ChessBase studio to reveal why there is much more to 1 e4 ♘c6 than you might have realised. He maps out a repertoire for Black with the Nimzowitsch Defence, although it must be said that his main goal is to reach the Nimzowitsch-Pirc hybrid which arises after 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 g6.

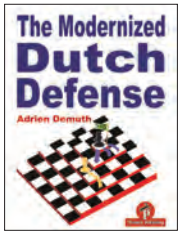


The Safest Grünfeld Reloaded
Alexander Delchev, 352 pages, paperback
RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

The strong Bulgarian Grandmaster has fully updated his Grünfeld repertoire from 2011. The core of the repertoire remains broadly unchanged, but there can be no doubt that in certain places an extensive reworking has occurred, which is no surprise considering both the scale of modern praxis and the improvement in the strength of chess engines. The tournament player will be pleased to learn that publisher Chess Stars have retained their earlier format, their classic one, introducing the key ideas and main line of each chapter first before delving deeply into the theory. Meanwhile Delchev has especially added plenty of new material in the chapter dealing with White's attempt to avoid the Grünfeld with 3 f3, while also revealing how readers should meet both 2 ♗g5 and 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗f4.

The Chess Gamer Volume 2: Return (2004-2013)
Gata Kamsky, 454 pages, paperback
RRP £30.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £27.85**

Having covered in the first volume, 'The Awakening 1989-1996', his early meteoric rise, Gata Kamsky returns by examining how his chess career unfolded after an eight-year hiatus from the board. Kamsky admits that it is not always a light read, as he tries "To share [his] vision of chess as a great intellectual battlefield where many factors play a role, including psychology and the science of computer home preparation." Those who do study the many deeply-annotated games should learn much, others will simply enjoy Kamsky's sometimes controversial take on various chess and non-chess topics.



The Modernized Dutch Defense
Adrien Demuth, 470 pages, paperback
SPECIAL PRICE £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

The French Grandmaster is acutely aware that 1 d4 f5 unsettles many white players, while giving Black every chance to strive for the full point. In this detailed repertoire for Thinkers Publishing, Demuth maps out a black repertoire centred on the Leningrad variation, while also revealing how to meet all White's tricky sidelines, such as 2 e4 and 2 ♘c3, as well as those no-less-tricky lines which White might prefer after 1 c4/♘f3 f5.

The Royal Chess Couple in Action
Hans Bohm & Yochanan Afek,
384 pages, paperback
RRP £30.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £27.85**

This impressive project presents some 480 positions, divided into two parts, dedicated respectively to the king and queen. The erudite authors have further divided the positions, which come from both over-the-board play and composition, by themes and motifs. Publishers Thinkers have also included a number of photographs, not of the players or composers featured, but rather of old versions of the pieces in question, as the book includes an historic review of their development.

British readers may be especially interested in one of the 120 mini-chapters entitled 'The Fearless Kings of Nigel Short'. We are most grateful to Yochanan Afek and Thinkers Publishing for permission to reprint the positions from that section in this month's PGN download. You're right that Short-Timman appears, but which other three king marches feature too?

Typical Mistakes by 1000-1600 Players
Nicholas Pert, PC-DVD;
running time: 4 hours, 40 minutes
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The ECF's Head Coach is the ideal guide to the most common mistakes made by different levels of club player. Pert's aim is to help all those between 1000 and 1600 cut out many of those mistakes and so improve. He looks at such topics as tactics, attacking and the endgame, while also going through some very revealing complete games and providing a number of interactive tests to ensure his advice really sinks in.

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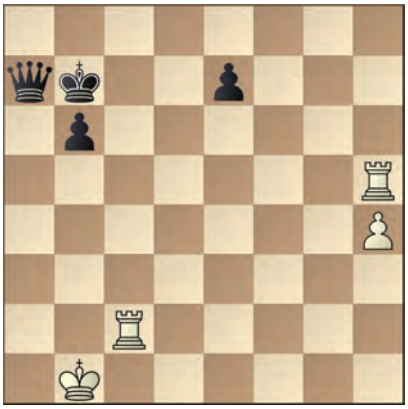
This month I thought I would dip into my mailbag of readers' letters. Let's start with a study/puzzle, which was sent to me by a reader in Bournemouth, Tony Leech, who said of this study: "I think it one of the cleverest and trickiest chess problems I've seen and I have to admit it completely stumped me, until I eventually gave up and gave it to an engine (*Stockfish*), which of course solved it in five seconds and after some minutes announced mate in 25!" It foxed me, too. See how you get on with it...

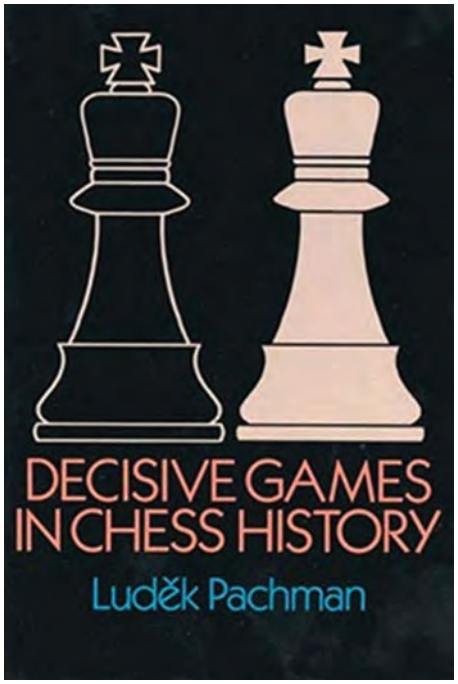


White to move and win

A secondary puzzle is the provenance of the study. Tony tells me he was shown it by a chess friend, Henryk Sobura, a very strong Polish player who lives in Dorset, but Tony doesn't know where it came from before that. I investigated online, but couldn't find any clues. Does anyone know its source? The solution is posted at the end of the article.

Last month you may recall me banging on about the frenetic chess that gets played in the last round of tournaments and writing this: "It's perhaps surprising that no chess author has ever turned his quill to producing a tome devoted exclusively to last-round games." I thought that was a hostage to fortune when I wrote it, recalling that a teacher who marked one of my school essays once accused me of being "Master of the sweeping statement". He wasn't wrong. (In my mind I've long since promoted myself to 'Grandmaster of the sweeping statement' – it's the one GM title I feel I'm entitled to.)

Full credit to reader Russell Sparkes who has proved me wrong. He writes, "This is not true. Somewhere in my attic is a decaying pile of chess books in descriptive notation. One of these is *Pachman's Decisive Games*, published in the late 1970s I think, which is not a collection of the author's own games, but rather a collection of decisive games mostly



Is there any topic in chess not touched by the breadth of the game's literature? Decisive Games in Chess History, *for instance, only contains last round battles.*

from the last round of tournaments and matches, spanning the period 1870-1972." You've got me bang to rights, Russell. There was indeed such a title published by Pitman in 1974.

This just shows that every possible aspect of the game we love has been covered by a chess scribbler somewhere. However, I do feel sorry for that pile of neglected books in descriptive notation, Russell. No need to banish them to the attic just because of the antique notation. I still love a bit of P–K4 when I'm reading, if only for the nostalgia.

My article on last rounds also inspired Ian Reynolds to write me a line or two:

"I enjoyed your article on this subject especially in the light of my own experience. In 2009 I played in the British Championship aged 65. I had previously played in 1965, aged 21 – most likely the longest period between events.

"In 1965 I had scored 4½. After 10 rounds in 2009 I had 4 points, so a win would mean I performed better than at 21! My opponent was Dominic Mackle who I discovered only got a FIDE rating from that tournament, so I did not gain any rating points from my win. It took 85 moves to win and was the last game to finish in the whole event – not just the Championship. And I was due to be in Leeds that night to attend an England Test match the following day. I am not aware we had any pre-game conversation nor much at the end!"

Yes, I imagine that a long post-game chat with Ian's opponent would have risked the ire of the arbiters who would have been keen to get the equipment packed away. But I was greatly impressed by the huge interval between Ian's two British Championship appearances – 44 years. At the risk of my incurring yet another sweeping statement GM norm, that has got to be some sort of record. It's probably only in mind sports such as chess that such gaps are feasible. Incidentally, if you're minded to look Ian's feat up in the record books, note that that Ian was usually referred to in publications of the 1960s as D. I. W. Reynolds. Everyone was known by their initials in those days.

Talk of long gaps between tournaments and players known by their initials leads me neatly to another player generally known in that way, H. E. Atkins, the formidable Leicestershire headmaster, who had a notable gap between his two batches of British Championship title wins – 13 years elapsed between him winning his seventh title in 1911 and his eighth in 1924. Replying to Ian, I reminded him of his fellow countryman John Trevelyan's achievement in winning the Welsh Chess Championship 33 years apart (1973 and 2006), and that Ian himself, who was Welsh Champion in 1965, could set that particular record at a staggering 55 years were he to regain it in 2020.

The other thing I'm reminded of is Leonard Barden and his remarkably long stint as chess columnist of *The Evening Standard* and *The Guardian*. Leonard turned 90 last month and he's still going strong. I meant to mention this last month, but I hope he'll forgive me and accept my warmest congratulations on reaching this milestone. My very first glimpse of the wider world of competitive chess came via his *Guardian* columns in the mid-1960s as I entered my teens, and it was his enthusiasm and expert journalism which tempted me to want to know more and dip my toe into the water myself. I still read his *Guardian* column every Saturday as avidly as I did more than fifty years ago, and hope to go on doing so for years to come.

Solution The winning move is **1 ♖hc5!!** when capturing with **1...bxc5** is answered by **2 ♖a2!** and the black queen's only escape squares allow a pin or a skewer with 3 ♖b2. And if Black captures the second rook, the h4-pawn will queen and win. Black has other possibilities on his first turn, but all result in the loss of the queen.

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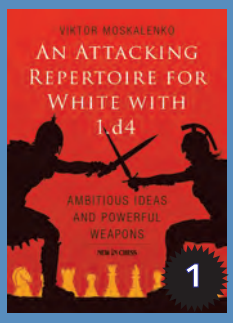

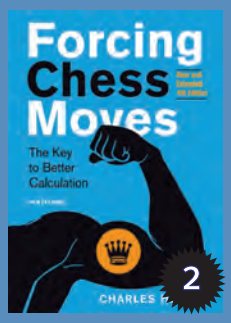

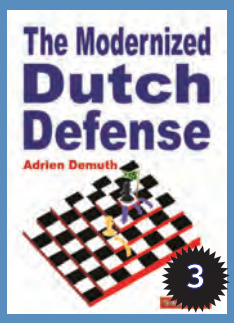

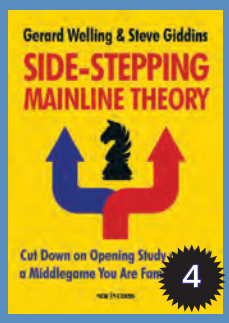

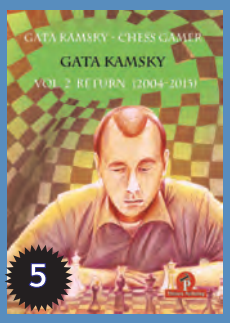

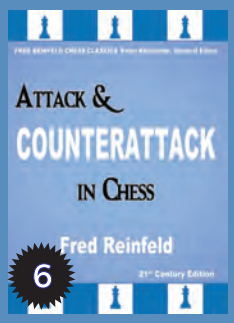

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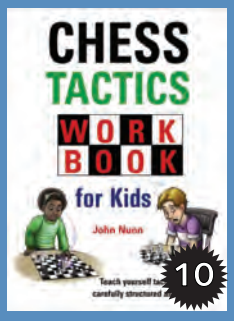

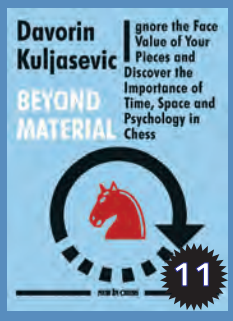

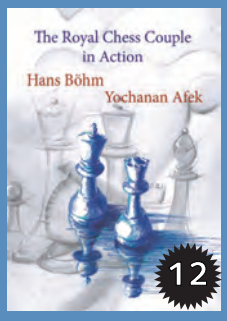

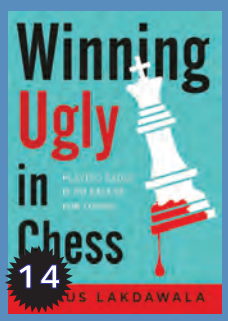

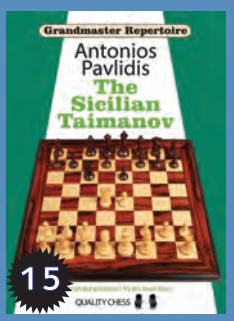

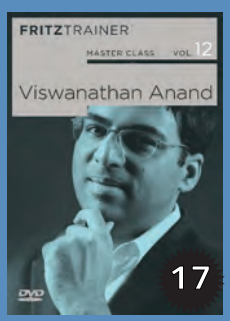

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